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PLUS: TWO NEW SEASONS OF THE NEW BRITISH FOOD - AND A GUIDE TO INVESTING LUMP SUMS

Brown rules out single currency for lifetime of this Parliament

BY PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

GORDON BROWN is on the verge of ruling out British membership of a European single currency before the next general election.

The Chancellor will, as expected, announce over the next few weeks that Britain will not join the first wave of monetary union on January 1, 1999. But at the same time he will act to protect the economy from damaging speculation about the Government's long-term intentions by making plain that Britain will not join in the present Parliament.

The decisions follow a five-month internal Treasury study on the terms set by Mr Brown for British entry and have been agreed with Tony Blair.

The approach runs directly counter to recent speculation that Britain would enter soon after the 1999 launch date. And it will dramatically change the political landscape: ministers' fears that the Government could get bogged down in a full-scale row over the pound will disappear.

The Chancellor gives the clearest signal so far of the Government's intentions in an interview today with *The Times* in which he speaks of his optimism about the economy. He says that he will make the announcement to Parliament before the end of the year, but he emphasises that it comes when he is ready and that he will not be rushed.

While making plain that the Government must keep open its long-term options for joining a single currency, he says that he is determined not to make the mistake of the Conservative Government over the European exchange-rate mechanism when it kept saying that it would join when "the time is right". It left open the possibility that it could join the next day or the next month with the result that every "waking hour" of the Tory government was dominated by the prospect. In the end, he says, it was forced to make the decision to go in for short-term political reasons rather than in the long-term national economic interest.

Mr Brown says he will not fall into the same trap. Having repeated that it was "highly unlikely" that Britain would enter in 1999, he adds: "If we do not join in 1999, we will not join in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 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Brown: We won't fall into the Tory trap

The 'Iron Chancellor' tells Philip Webster he will not be rushed into announcing decision on EMU

GORDON BROWN'S expected decision to rule out British participation in the single currency for the lifetime of this Parliament is historic.

But it does not mean that the pro-European Chancellor is shutting Labour's door forever on economic and monetary union. Indeed, if Labour goes on to win a second term the prospect of a referendum on a single currency soon after the next election remains strong.

Throughout his interview with *The Times* yesterday, Mr Brown was insistent that any decision he was about to take with Tony Blair on EMU should not be seen in any way as lessening the Government's desire for close co-operation in Europe.

Despite all the "frenzied speculation", he was not going to be rushed into a decision, he said. For five months he and his officials have been studying whether his five tests for British membership have been met.

For the long term, Mr Brown

says, it would be folly to close down the option of entry given that membership of a single currency could have advantages to Britain. "We have regard and influence in Europe following the Amsterdam summit."

"We would lose that influence if we followed the Tory line and ruled out joining. The last Government had a policy of wait-and-see as a way of hiding divisions. This Government will put the national economic interest first."

But he says: "We will only join if doing so is in Britain's national economic interest. ... We said in our manifesto, and it remains true today, that it is highly unlikely that Britain can join in the first wave."

The questions we have been asking are: Is our economic cycle out of line with our European partners; are there long-term changes we must make to ensure our economy is sufficiently flexible to cope with shocks; and has

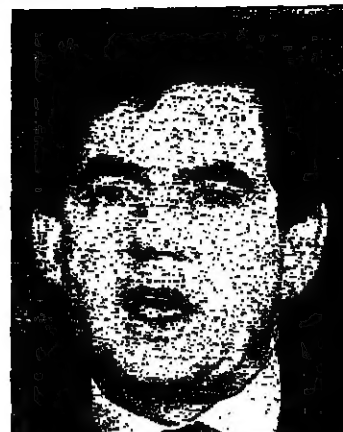
British business had time to prepare?"

The answers to those questions are clear. Mr Brown will rule out first-wave entry soon.

Indeed he has long doubted whether that or membership this century would be practicable or desirable and has been infuriated by reports suggesting that he has been trying to "bounce" the Prime Minister.

But having decided against going in on January 1, 1999, Mr Brown does not want to have his attempts to put Britain's economy back on track derailed by a continuing welter of speculation about the single currency.

As he says, "I am determined that we will not fall into the trap which the Conservatives fell into over the exchange-rate mechanism by saying they would join 'when the time is right' and implying in doing so that it could join the next day or the next month, allowing



Brown: said decision will be based on long-term interests

that possibility to dominate every waking hour and week of the Government, and then eventually being forced to make the decision for short-term political reasons —

not, as it should have been, the long-term national economic interest.

"If we do not join in 1999, our task will be to deliver a period of sustainable growth, tackle the long-term weaknesses of the UK economy and to continue to press for reform in Europe — in other words to make sure the British tests are being met." The signals were loud and clear.

Although D-Day on EMU is nigh, Mr Brown has plenty on his plate. Next month he is to introduce his first "green" Budget, opening up the process to consultation in advance of the real thing next spring.

When *The Times* interviewed the Chancellor at the end of August, he was refusing to be "blown off course" by worries that the pound was too strong and that he had not done enough in the Budget to dampen down consumer demand. Now he feels vindicated

by events since then and says he is more optimistic that he is on course to get the economy back on track.

But the problems of Labour's inheritance from the Tories, and the inflationary pressures that should have been dealt with earlier, remain.

And in order to get the economy moving further towards a path of sustainable and strong growth, Mr Brown advises that there will be no let-up in the Iron Chancellor's grip.

The imminent Bank of England Bill will reinforce monetary discipline, he says, and the green Budget will show that his determination to rein in public spending will be as strong as ever.

Mr Brown says that this week's £300 million for the health service was found because the money was extracted from other budgets. "We worked within the control totals set by the last Government and we

will continue to work within those totals." And he says that if other departments overspend they will face the same fate as the Ministry of Defence, whose £168 million "fine" helped to make up the health money.

Mr Brown knows that he has a long haul ahead. In Europe, even outside the single currency, he says that he intends to take the lead in promoting a more flexible and dynamic economy.

"This is essential if the single currency is to succeed. In or out, British business and British jobs will be affected by the single currency. That is why we have made promoting employment and flexibility central to our agenda," he said.

Mr Brown continues to talk like a good European. The imminent announcement on the single currency means that he and the rest of the Government may have to work harder over the next few years to prove that.

Leading article, page 23

Lawyers fear poor will lose justice in legal aid reform

By FRANCES GIBB AND NICHOLAS WATT

THE Government provoked a storm of protest yesterday when it outlined plans to scrap the bulk of the civil legal aid scheme in the most radical shake-up of legal services in 50 years.

In a signal of the Prime Minister's determination to confront vested interests, Downing Street released details of a nine-point plan by Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, to make the system fairer and cheaper.

The sweeping reforms to the system, whose costs have mushroomed by 115 per cent over the past six years to £1.47 billion a year, will include withdrawing legal aid from most civil actions in favour of the "no win, no fee" scheme. Ministers believe that the reforms will reduce costs and open up the courts to middle-income earners too rich to qualify for legal aid but too poor to risk litigation.

Lawyers gathering for the Law Society's annual conference in Cardiff were further angered that the details they

will hear from Lord Irvine today were given to journalists in London at a briefing yesterday.

Lord Irvine will say: "The legal aid system must develop or decay. ... It must be made a tool to promote access to justice for the needy, not seen by the public as something basically keeping lawyers in business. It is the people's needs that justify our having legal aid in the first place." But

a furor erupted yesterday on the first day of the conference when Downing Street released details of his speech. Lawyers, consumer groups and advice workers warned that the plans would block access to justice for 20 million adults who currently qualify.

Philip Sycamore, president of the Law Society of England and Wales, said: "This is a severe withdrawal of access to justice for many of our citizens. It is very, very disappointing news for consumers. What we are seeing is a considerable curtailment of rights for many people in society, a lot of them very poor and very vulnerable."

He stressed that the Law Society was fully in favour of "no win, no fee" work, which was introduced for personal injury, insolvency and human rights cases two years ago under the last government. But, Mr Sycamore said, it should not be a substitute for civil legal aid.

The Government sought to allay fears about the impact on high-risk claims for medical negligence which lawyers could be reluctant to take on a "no win, no fee" basis. Fears have been voiced that many claimants could be blocked from pursuing action because they would have to take out prohibitively expensive insurance to cover the other side's legal costs if they lost. Sources made clear that Lord Irvine would look carefully at such cases.

zens. It is very, very disappointing news for consumers. What we are seeing is a considerable curtailment of rights for many people in society, a lot of them very poor and very vulnerable."

He stressed that the Law Society was fully in favour of "no win, no fee" work, which was introduced for personal injury, insolvency and human rights cases two years ago under the last government. But, Mr Sycamore said, it should not be a substitute for civil legal aid.

The Government sought to allay fears about the impact on high-risk claims for medical negligence which lawyers could be reluctant to take on a "no win, no fee" basis. Fears have been voiced that many claimants could be blocked from pursuing action because they would have to take out prohibitively expensive insurance to cover the other side's legal costs if they lost. Sources made clear that Lord Irvine would look carefully at such cases.

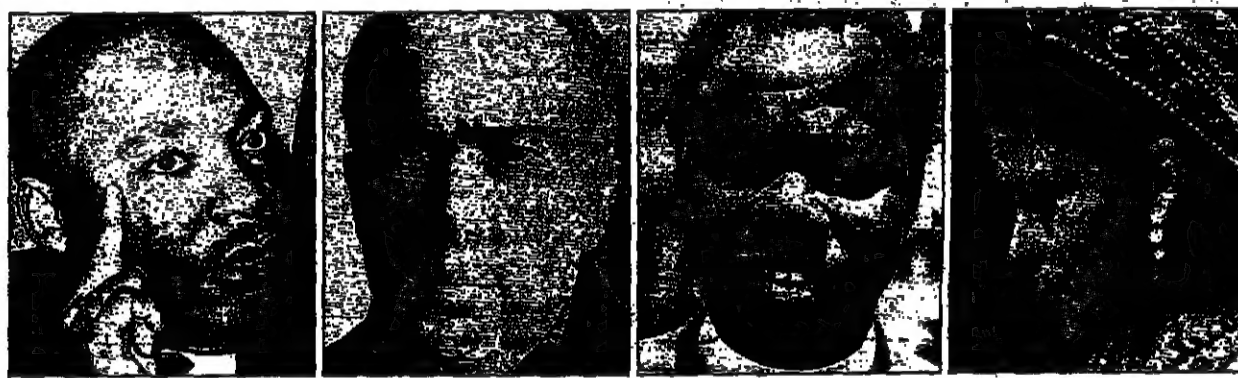
LORD CHANCELLOR'S PROPOSALS

Lord Irvine's nine-point plan will include:

- extending the "no win, no fee" scheme from next April to all civil proceedings, except family cases;
- withdrawing legal aid from claims for money or damages, which form the bulk of civil cases;
- consultation about legislation to toughen the tests before legal aid is granted for the civil cases that still qualify;
- contracts for all civil cases, with the Legal Aid Board buying from lawyers and advice bureaux at agreed prices;
- contracting will eventually extend to criminal legal aid, shortening cases like that of the Maxwell brothers;
- lawyers must assess the likelihood of a case succeeding. A legal aid contract will depend on the assessments;
- exemption from court fees will be extended to those on Family Credit or disability allowances;



The vacant niches over Westminster Abbey's great west door and, below from left, four of the modern martyrs to be commemorated: Martin Luther King, Maximilian Kolbe, Archbishop Luthm and Grand Duchess Elizabeth



Continued from page 1

the distinctive external niches that are a feature of Gothic church architecture, although Canterbury Cathedral has commemorated modern martyrs in two books placed in a chapel. The niches on the west front of Westminster Abbey have stood empty since it was built in the late 13th century.

The ten new figures were chosen by an abbey committee chaired by Canon Anthony Harvey, the Sub-Dean, which met over two years. As well as well-known figures such as the German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, murdered by

Modern martyrs

the Nazis in 1945, they include martyrs who have until now achieved little recognition outside their own country, such as Esther John of Pakistan, a Presbyterian evangelist killed by her Muslim brother in 1960.

Others are Masmeola, of South Africa, a 16-year-old Anglican catechist killed by her mother in 1928; Lucian Tapiedi, of New Guinea, killed by Japanese invaders in 1942; Maximilian Kolbe, of Poland, a Franciscan canonised

by the Roman Catholic Church, who was killed by the Nazis in 1943; Wang Ziming, of China, a Miao Christian pastor killed in 1972 in the Cultural Revolution; and Archbishop Janani Luthm, of Uganda, assassinated in 1977 during the rule of Idi Amin.

The statues will be unveiled next summer in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, and world church leaders, who will be assembling in Britain for the Lambeth Conference. The statues are being carved by Tim Crawley, head carver with the stonemasons Rattee and Ket.

Loyalists attack parade measures

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE Government yesterday unveiled legislation to tackle the hugely divisive issue of parades in Northern Ireland, but loyalists and Unionists swiftly denounced it as draconian, unworkable and yet another sop to republicans.

The Bill would transfer from the Royal Ulster Constabulary to the independent Parades Commission the power to impose conditions on parades where local agreements were unattainable. Conditions would include re-routing and restrictions on size, regalia and music.

It would allow the Commission to consider a wider range of criteria in reaching its decisions. At present the RUC can reroute a parade only if public order is threatened, but the Commission would be able to examine factors such as tradition, disruption and impact on community relations.

The RUC chief constable could appeal to the Northern Ireland Secretary if concerned about a Commission ruling, and the police could intervene

on the day to preserve order. The Secretary would retain the power to ban parades.

The legislation, to be pushed through Parliament before next summer's marching season, is based on January's North Report. Loyalists, who stage the great majority of the 3,000 parades each year, hoped the Commission would also be empowered to rule on displays of nationalist culture. These would include the behaviour of fans travelling in caravans to Gaelic football and hurling matches. The Bill says the Commission should be empowered to review "public manifestations of cultural identity" other than parades, but not yet. The original draft envisaged a delay of at least a year, but faced with strong Unionist objections this was changed to several months.

David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist Party leader, called the Bill one-sided and accused the Government of retreating on an undertaking to empower the Commission to rule on displays of nationalist culture.

Scottish parliament 'homeless in 2000'

SCOTLAND'S parliament will be homeless when it meets in Edinburgh in early 2000, the Government admitted (Shirley English writes).

The 129 members will make their debut in temporary accommodation, possibly in Edinburgh City Chambers or the former Royal High School at Calton Hill, until a £40million new building is completed.

Donald Dewar, Scottish Secretary, said that the site was unlikely to be chosen until next year, leaving no time to finish the project before the first session.

The delay would allow more time for consultation and "robust" costings of the three possible sites: Calton Hill, Morrison Street car park, and Leith docks.

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Ampleforth has much greater expectations

David Charter

on a top school's alternative to an 'inadequate' GCSE literature syllabus

AMPLEFORTH College, Britain's top Roman Catholic school, has scrapped English Literature GCSEs because the examination is too easy and launched its own "traditional" alternative.

Chaucer, Fielding and Swift are prominent on the DIY syllabus introduced by the £12,400-a-year college in North Yorkshire — because the GCSE gave too little opportunity to study the greats of English literature.

All 95 boys in their GCSE year at the boarding school, whose old boys include the novelist Piers Paul Read, will take the Ampleforth Literature Certificate next summer. The GCSE has been abandoned after a trial group of 23 boys took the school's certificate this summer and received high praise from the external examiner, a school inspector.

The school's move comes as independent schools are showing increasing dissatisfaction with GCSEs. The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference of leading schools called earlier this month for the abolition of the examinations, saying they failed to prepare students for A-level GCSEs were introduced a

decade ago to combine the O level and the CSE, which critics felt watered down the demands being placed on students.

Andrew Carter, head of English at Ampleforth, said he had received inquiries from several other independent schools thinking of following his example.

"The GCSE was not delivering what we see as a broad and rich literature course," said Mr Carter. "We had been feeling for some time that the GCSE literature syllabus was becoming too prescriptive in terms of choice of text."

Mr Carter said he also thought it "irrelevant" to compare works, as required by

GCSE. "Comparing a Shakespeare play with a 20th century novel is detracting from the literary qualities of the text itself," he said. "If a text is worth studying, it is worth studying for itself."

The Ampleforth Literature Certificate includes a two-and-a-half hour final examination and three-quarters of the marks are given to coursework, compared to one-third at GCSE. This allowed for a more flexible syllabus and more fun, said Mr Carter.

"Dickens' *Great Expectations* was the only substantial text on the GCSE syllabus and there was one Shakespeare play. The choice of poets was frankly disappointing," he said.

Dr Richard Palmer, the external examiner, checked the papers marked by Ampleforth's own teachers, and described much of the work as of A level standard. "The quality and sheer quantity of work achieved is far superior to that required by normal GCSE literature students," he said.

Although independent schools are under no requirement to follow the national curriculum, Ampleforth will still teach the GCSE English language course.

"The great majority of parents have been very supportive of what we are doing," said Mr Carter. He added that he had talked informally to universities, whose reactions had been "positive".

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which approves examination board syllabuses, said it did not recognise the Ampleforth Certificate as an official qualification. "Any school can set any internal examination it likes. It is not a qualification, it is an internal school exam."



Chaucer and Swift are prominent on the new DIY syllabus introduced by the North Yorkshire college



Baby had old injury, au pair trial told

By TUNKE VARADARAJAN

THE baby boy allegedly killed by his British au pair suffered a brain injury more than three weeks before the day she is supposed to have shaken him to death, a court in the United States was told yesterday.

Dr Jan Edward Lesmana, a forensic neuropathologist from the Chicago Institute of Neurology and Neuro-Rehabilitation, said that he had had evidence that nine-month-old Matthew Eappen had a subdural injury at least three weeks before his admission to a Boston hospital in February.

Louise Woodward, 19, from Eton, near Chester, denies murder. Dr Lesmana said that on February 4, Matthew actually suffered "bleeding in an old injury". Dr Lesmana is the author of the only current textbook on forensic neuropathology, and the first expert medical witness called by the defence.

He said that specimens of Matthew's dura, or brain matter, had "shown a haemorrhage three to four weeks old". In direct contradiction to every medical witness who has preceded him in the trial, he said that Matthew had not been shaken violently on the day he was taken to hospital, and that he could not accept "to a reasonable degree of medical certainty" that Matthew's head had been slammed against a hard surface.

Earlier, Elizabeth Ann Lord, headmistress of Helys High School, which Miss Woodward attended, said: "She was absolutely peaceful and non-violent. She was always honest and straightforward." The trial, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, continues.

Killer says jail smokers are a threat to health

By Emma Wilkins

A MURDERER is threatening to take legal action against the Prison Service because he is being made to share a cell with a smoker. Alex Deas, who has served 16 years of a life sentence, claims the smoke is damaging to his health, and wants to be moved to a single cell or to share with a non-smoking inmate.

Deas, 37, who killed a man in a street stabbing, claims his complaints have been ignored by the authorities at Winslow Greet prison, Birmingham. He is now seeking a judicial review in the High Court of the decision to put him in a cell with a smoker.

His solicitor, Milton Firman, said: "It is the responsibility of the Prison Service to protect the health of prisoners. By ignoring my client's request, they are failing to protect his health and are endangering his life."

Deas was moved from Sudbury open prison in Derbyshire in March after a "disciplinary problem" and faces the possibility of serving the next 12 months in Winslow Green — a closed prison.

"He has been sharing a cell since Easter with first one and then another smoker," Mr Firman said. "He could be in closed confinement for up to another 12 months, so obviously he does not want to spend the next year passively smoking."

A spokesman for the Prison Service said every effort was made to keep smokers and non-smokers separate but the pressures of numbers meant that this was not possible. "He may well be locked up with someone who smokes. Obviously that's something we try and avoid, but it's not the Ritz. Part of prison life is that he may well spend time with somebody else in a cell."

It is every inmate's right to take whatever legal action he wishes, the spokesman added. The threat of litigation comes as two studies claim to show that passive smoking increased the risk of heart disease by 23 per cent and lung cancer by 26 per cent.

As a result of the studies, the Health and Safety Executive said yesterday it would be looking at its guidelines to companies on smoking policies. Employment law specialists believe that no-smoking policies will now spread throughout industry to counter fears of future legal action. Mary Stacey, an employment rights specialist at Thompson's solicitors, said: "It is not correct to say that the rights of smokers are equal to the rights of non-smokers."

Marjorie Nicholson, director of the smoking group Forest, said that the study on passive smoking and heart disease was flawed because it was confined to a group aged 65 and did not spell out other risk factors.

Two Irish housewives are seeking up to £1 million in damages from cigarette companies in a landmark legal action which began in Dublin yesterday. Susan Riley and Ann Moloney, both in their 40s, claim their illnesses, including lung cancer and respiratory problems, were caused by cigarettes and want compensation from the Carrolls, John Player and Gallaher tobacco companies in Ireland.

Traffic wardens want body armour

By Stewart Tindler
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

TRAFFIC wardens are asking the Home Office for bullet-proof and stab-proof vests.

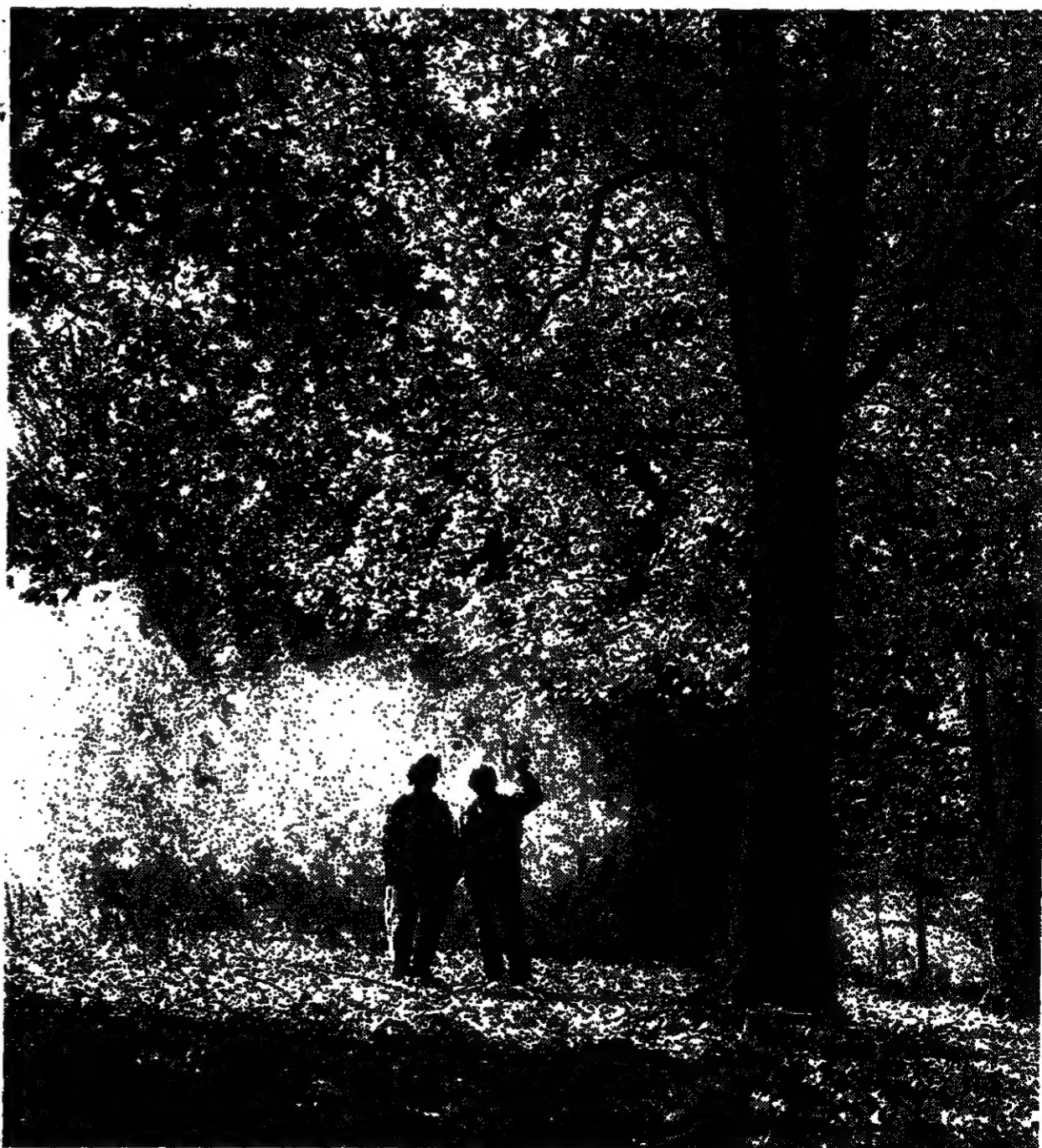
Their appeal was made to a team from the Inspectorate of Constabulary that has been examining better protection and safety for police staff. Many wardens throughout the country expressed fears about being on the streets.

Yesterday Colin Smith, the inspector responsible for the team's report, said that all police staff on the front line should be consulted about protection and equipment. The wardens generally feel threatened and we do come across wardens who have been assaulted quite seriously," he said. "It came across from quite a few and not just in the big cities."

"Traffic wardens feel that the more they look like policemen the less likely they are to be attacked. I think they do have a valid point. The police uniform does inhibit some people and traffic wardens seem fair game."

In his report Mr Smith, a former Chief Constable of Thames Valley, calls on chief constables to look at the risks wardens face and issue protection if necessary. Wardens could also be taught how to handle difficult motorists tactfully to avoid confrontations and calm conflicts. But he ruled out any suggestion that the wardens might have to carry CS sprays which he urges all forces to adopt.

In the past three years wardens in Wiltshire and Wolverhampton have been shot with air rifles. Others have been dragged behind cars, run over and punched.



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Photograph, page 32

Why slapstick clowns are in a mess

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

THE clown princes of slapstick comedy, whose knockabout routines leave their audiences as wet and covered in gunge as themselves, are in danger of slipping off the nation's stages. The circus world was warned this week that only one veteran clown in the country is still performing a proper slapstick routine.

World's Fair, the trade newspaper of circus performers, lamented that less earthy, more avant-garde acts have pushed slapstick out of the ring and off the curriculum at circus schools. A tradition of clowning that flourished in this country with such masters as Coco and Charlie Cairoli, now faces extinction.

Don Stacey, the circus editor of *World's Fair*, said that Karl Brenner, a 58-year-old German based in Britain who worked with the legendary Coco, could be the last of a kind. Brenner and his partner have "devastated" audiences at the Big City Circus in Chesham, Buckinghamshire for two years.

Brenner takes an hour to whip up the water and shaving foam for his act, a few minutes to perform and an hour to clear up the auditorium afterwards. He said: "At the moment I am the only one who does this. Not everyone wants to get involved with the mess. It's much easier to be a normal clown and get out of the ring and you are finished."

"We go outrageous and don't care how

much water and soap there is. That's the importance, that's where the fun is."

The mess is one thing. The influence of continental clowning, which has never had much truck with slapstick, has been another. Mr Stacey said that slapstick had been waning since the Fifties.

Gerry Cottle, the circus impresario, also lamented the decline, but is planning one last stand. In a couple of weeks he will launch an assault on the world record for throwing custard pies. The record, of 3,000, was set by Laurel and Hardy in 1927. The audience at the Roundhouse in North London will be issued with plastic masks.

Novel success for teenager who quit school to write

FROM DALYA ALBERGE IN FRANKFURT

A NOVEL written by a girl who left school at 16 because she wanted to write has been snapped up by a leading publisher.

A Certain Age, the story of a 14-year-old that features self-mutilation, sex and drugs, has been bought by Michael Joseph Penguin. It was written by Rebecca Ray when she was 17.

Louise Moore, the company's fiction publisher, yesterday described the story as "completely unputdownable". She added: "She's a real writer. This is not a one-off." The book was offered to her by Patrick Walsh, of the Christopher Little literary agency in London.

At the Frankfurt Book Fair, Mr Walsh called it an "incredibly tough novel ... It's as if Lolita had written a very serious novel. People will be shocked by it. But the shock will be transformed by the quality." Last year Mr Walsh discovered Michael Cordy, a former marketing executive who is now on the way to becoming a millionaire with his first novel.

The book is about a girl from a dysfunctional family exploring her own character through an affair with a 29-year-old man. Although elements of it draw on real-life characters, the young writer

insisted that it was not autobiographical. "It is about innocence," she said.

Miss Ray, who turned 18 this month, grew up in central Wales. She got 8 GCSEs at grade A or A* at Llanidloes School in Powys, but says she felt like a square peg in a round hole in the classroom. "I wanted to do something with my life. I wanted to get started, to write as a living," she said yesterday.

Her father, a guitar teacher and songwriter, and her mother, a ceramicist, had fully backed her decision to leave school. The family was creative, said Miss Ray, who has adopted her grandmother's maiden name in preference to the family name of Dickman. The only pressure from her parents was to "try to create. But that didn't feel like pressure."

Her father, Nick Dickman, recalled that she has been writing since the age of four. "She knows what's going on in the world. She chose a subject people want to know about. It's a fairly hidden world, the teen world. She's talking in the language that kids use at school."

A Certain Age is likely to be published in the new year and Miss Ray is planning a thank-you letter to her English teacher.

A CERTAIN AGE

In this passage from the book, the central character joins some friends for a disco at a community centre:

"I was meeting the girls at seven ... I could tell I looked good when I met Tracy and Danielle at the bridge and they stopped being friendly. Tracy wasn't pretty and she had acne that she covered with cheap foundation. It made her skin into a weird beige colour. She had good legs, and wore belts instead of skirts just to prove it. None of that mattered though. Tracy was going out with Stuart Bailey, and Stuart Bailey was gorgeous. Also, Tracy wasn't a virgin. Danielle was different. She was the prettiest girl in the whole year. Danielle was the captain of the netball team and she didn't let anybody feel her up. She didn't need to."



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NEWS FOR CON



VOUCH

Handwritten signatures and scribbles at the bottom right of the page.

Blair looks to people for new first citizen

Lord-lieutenants will come from outside elite, writes Valerie Elliott

THE Labour crusade to modernise Britain is to target the office of lord-lieutenants, an elite band of the Queen's men — and a handful of women — who act as first citizen in each county.

By changing the traditional way that lord-lieutenants are chosen and appointed, Tony Blair also hopes to help the monarchy along its declared path of being more in touch with the people after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

The post of lord-lieutenant was created in 1537, to act as the king's representatives in the shires charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order and the local defence forces in their area. Their duties are greatly reduced, but they are still largely recruited from retired army officers, minor aristocracy and family names redolent of successful Victorian mercantile endeavours.

Mr Blair wants to widen the recruitment pool, to give local people in touch with their communities a chance to fulfil duties on behalf of the royal family. The duties are no longer onerous: lord-lieutenants are responsible for royal visits to their county, chair the local commission of the peace which recommends the appointment of magistrates, keep in touch with their local Territorial Army units, and hand out some royal awards like the Queen's Award for exports and Queen's Scout and Guide badges.

The Prime Minister's plan is to speed up a process which has already encouraged people from the business world to take on the ancient office of the Queen's representative in the counties. Names like Samuel Whitbread, of the brewing family, for example, was a lord-lieutenant of

Bedfordshire, and Sir Timothy Colman, of the mustard dynasty, in Norfolk, already sit comfortably alongside sons of noble families such as the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, who is Lord Lieutenant of Roxburgh, Elrick and Lauderdale.

The Government is now keen to identify a broader range of individuals, with more women — there are just four out of nearly 300 lord-lieutenants — as well as appointing the first black or Asian into the office. Tony Blair still wishes to appoint "people of standing" in localities but believes it can be given a fresher image by bringing in new blood.

One method of achieving this, which is likely to be explored, is to introduce a fixed term appointment of perhaps three, five or seven years for the office-holders. At present a lord-lieutenant is usually selected in their early 60s and can stay in post until 75.

The job requires someone with time and sufficient means. The post is unpaid and a ceremonial uniform alone for a male lord-lieutenant costs £2,500 — women do not have a uniform.

They receive £25 a week for a secretary and £25 a week for a chauffeur, and are allowed to claim petrol expenses — 43p a mile for a car less than 2 litres, and 46p a mile over 2 litres. They are also able to claim up to £80 for any overnight hotel stay in connection with their duties.

By having a greater turnover of people acting as the sovereign's representative in the counties, the Royal Family would be influenced by more individuals who had little connection with court circles.



Gérard Depardieu and Demi Moore assess Chanel's creations in Paris, including a tweed suit and matching beret worn by Naomi Campbell

Hollywood stars rush to dress the part

DEMI MOORE appears to have a season ticket to the catwalk shows this year, but her arrival at Chanel in Paris yesterday nevertheless sent a ripple of excitement through the auditorium.

Had she or hadn't she secured the film rights to the life of Coco Chanel, as related by the American writer Axel Madsen in his biography?

As Ms Moore took her front-row seat next to Gérard Depardieu, only she knew. But if the film is made — with the actress in the title role — it could result in a lucrative costume deal for Chanel and a lucrative merchandising effort.

And that, it is rumoured, is what the strong Hollywood presence at this week's Paris shows is all about. It used to be that the only deals done

Lucrative deals are in the air as the studios shop for costumes, reports Grace Bradberry

were over Oscars dresses. In the late 1980s, Armani even established a Los Angeles liaison office with Oscars exposure in mind. But that is nothing compared with the champagne bonanza of a movie contract.

A figure of \$6 million has been touted as Jean Paul Gaultier's fee for dressing the cast of *The Fifth Element*, starring Bruce Willis. Other design houses look set to follow.

There's nothing new of course in seeing designer clothes in films. Audrey Hepburn wore Givenchy in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, Richard Gere sported Armani in *American Gigolo*.

Yet when *Evita* was made into a film, John Galiano declared he was too busy to create Madonna's costumes. It's hard to imagine any designer saying that in the current climate.

The designers have realised that people don't differentiate between movie images and fashion images," says Aldo Belknap, an American art director. "The clothes the studios are asking for are very fashion, and they are prepared to spend the money."

Officially the stars are here for the fun of it. "There's no political intent at all. It's quite innocent," says Nicole Kidman's publicist Catherine Olim.

Kidman attended the Galliano show for Dior, as did Kristin Scott Thomas and the ubiquitous Demi Moore.

What of the rumours that Kidman has secured a £2 million contract to wear Dior for the next year? "Flattering but not true," says Ms Olim.

Demi Moore's publicist Allan Eichhorn attributes similarly innocent motives to his client. "She's never done it before."

Bernard Danillion, the man responsible for securing celebrity attendance at Dior, was delighted by Kidman's appearance, and dismissed talk of deals saying: "Pretty women have always been interested in pretty clothes." Perhaps, but today's pretty women are smarter than ever before.

Fashion, Magazine, page 58

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mother of 'bullied' pupil sues

The mother of a teenager allegedly bullied at a leading state school is suing education officials for not protecting her son. John Carnell, now 16, was one of ten children withdrawn from the 1,050-pupil Harrogate Grammar School in North Yorkshire between 1994 and 1996 over claims of harassment by fellow pupils.

Liz Carnell's lawyers have issued a summons at Harrogate County Court seeking damages from the North Yorkshire education authority. Last year Harrogate Grammar was placed in the top 32 secondary schools in England and Wales.

Tests draw blank

DNA tests on 169 men aged 15 to 35 in Pleine-Fougères, Brittany, where the British schoolgirl Caroline Dickinson was raped and murdered last year, have drawn a blank, French police said yesterday. Men over 35 will be tested next.

Caravanners die

Peter Swanborough, 64, and his wife, Sybil, 70, of Hatfield Peverel, Essex, have died on a caravan tour of France from a faulty heater's gas fumes. Their bodies were discovered by campers near Clermont-Ferrand in central France.

Urgent delivery

Police halted traffic on a road near Carmarthen, West Wales, for two hours so that a cow could give birth. The cow refused to move, so all vehicles were stopped and a vet was called. Police said the cow and calf were both doing well.

Drivers 'blinded'

Six bus drivers in Dewsbury, west Yorkshire, were temporarily blinded in separate incidents by children shining "laser" pens at them. They were treated in hospital. The pens emit a strong red light and are used by teachers.

Litter of the law

Two anti-litter campaigners in Southsea, Hampshire, were fined £25 for placing their group's leaflets on car windcreens. The local council told Linda Symes and Pat Huxtable to remove the leaflets but they ignored the warning.

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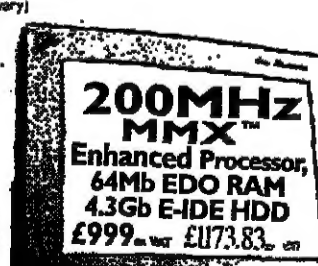
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Class act by Queen fails to heal rift back home

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Class act by Queen fails to heal rift back home

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN COCHIN AND JILL SHERMAN

THE QUEEN reached across India's caste system yesterday to accept an earthenware pot from an Untouchable, as a royal statement failed to heal British political divisions over her state visit.

With a smile, the Queen took the gift from Gayathiri Olivier, 19, who earns £7 a month as a trainee potter under a Christian Aid scheme. Few high-caste Hindus would accept a gift from an Untouchable, now usually called Dalits (the oppressed), and especially not a pot for drinking. The highlight of a successful day of grassroots engagements, it was the kind of human touch that the Queen intends to introduce more frequently after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

In Britain, Labour was accusing the Conservatives of politicising the visit by criticising Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary. In turn, Mr Cook said that some of the tour's problems had been caused by the previous Government's

decision to let it go ahead on the 50th anniversary of independence, although the arrangements were made at India's invitation.

A royal statement, issued by an official travelling with the Queen, had said: "We have seen media reports suggesting that the Queen is unhappy with the Government's handling of arrangements. That is not the case. The Queen has been entirely satisfied with the advice from the Foreign Secretary and his officials. The Queen has very much appreciated the warmth of the welcome she has received."

Mr Cook welcomed the Palace statement, but admitted that it should not have had to be made: "You have to look at those papers that falsely suggested a rift between the Palace and the Government. There is none. All of us in public life should back up Her Majesty."

He said that he had inherited the visit from his Tory predecessors, who set it up at



The human touch: a smile from the Queen as she accepts her gift from Gayathiri Olivier, 'one of the oppressed'

the invitation of India: "It might have been helpful if they had arranged this trip at some moment other than the 50th anniversary, so we could have focused on looking forward into the 21st century."

He stressed again that he had made no public comment about Kashmir while in Pakistan, despite reports that he had offered Britain's help as a mediator with India. He admitted the issue had come

up during discussions with the Prime Minister of Pakistan, but said that he could not have walked out of the room when the dispute was raised.

Michael Howard, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, said that it was irrelevant that the remarks were made in private: "If he doesn't realise that what you say in private is as important as what you say in public, he should not be Foreign Secretary." Peter

Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, said: "It is a shame that Michael Howard should seek to play party political games with such an important state visit."

The Queen's engagements yesterday brought thousands on to the rain-soaked streets. She visited the tiny community of Jew Town, down to its last 20 people there were once 2,500 Jews in Kerala state. The last event of the day took

her to a fishing community of 64 families, where Britain's Department for International Development has spent about £12,000 on a regeneration scheme. The Queen was shown into a pungent-smelling hut where women were packing fish.

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will head for home today.

Weekend, page 1

Princess's mother says world must care more

By Emma Wilkins

THE mother of Diana, Princess of Wales, has made a public appeal for a more caring society in which the poor are treated, not ignored. Frances Shand Kydd sent a message of support to a charity in Glasgow which helps more than 100 poor families in the city.

One in three children in Britain were living in poor conditions without even hope to sustain them, Mrs Shand Kydd wrote in a message which was read out at a rally yesterday marking the United Nations World Day for Overcoming Poverty.

In the address, which reflected some of the Princess's concerns for the welfare of young people, Mrs Shand said that it was "a poignant paradox" that those children were experiencing "not only material poverty, but a poverty of spirit and hope, where even basic human dignity is beyond their reach".

She added: "We need to create a more caring society. A society that can be proud of itself because of the way it treats its poor — not by the way it ignores them."

Mrs Shand Kydd, who lives on the Isle of Seil, near Oban, agreed to write the address, which was read out by a charity worker after she was contacted by the Bridgend Link group. She congratulated the group on its work.

THE SUNDAY TIMES DOLLY: HER TRUE STORY



On a soft summer night in July last year, the most famous lamb in history was born in a shed in Scotland. She was a clone — a scientific landmark equal to the splitting of the atom. Only now can the true extent of this achievement be revealed: a story of two unknown scientists battling against mainstream science's indifference. Dolly's true story is an extraordinary tale...

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Court News: a monarch writes

ROYAL officials could not recall yesterday when they last had to issue a statement papering over perceived cracks between the Queen and her ministers. But the archives of *The Times* reveal a time when the monarch's only route through a thicket of obfuscation and half-baked political excuses.

Queen Victoria was much distressed at criticism of her withdrawal from public life after the death from typhoid of Prince Albert in 1861. A letter in her own hand was delivered to Downing House Square. It was unsigned and ran under Court News, but everyone guessed the author.

"An erroneous idea seems generally to prevail, and has latterly found expression in the newspapers, that the Queen is about to resume the place in society which she occupied before her great affliction; that is, that she is about again to 'hold levees and drawing-rooms in

Archives reveal a daring attempt to ease tensions, reports Alan Hamilton

person, and to appear as before at Court balls, concerts, &c. This idea cannot be too explicitly contradicted." Straight talk and a bit of a scoop.

Present-day constitutional monarchy strives harder to remain aloof from politics. Some of this week's commentators have forgotten the cardinal rule of constitutional monarchy: the Sovereign acts only on the advice of her ministers.

The reverse of this golden coin is that the monarch and her ministers must never be seen to be at odds, hence the swift denial from Sir Robert Fellowes, the Queen's Private Secretary, in New

Delhi yesterday that the monarch had any dispute with her Foreign Secretary.

If the royal tour was less than perfect, it was certainly not the fault of the Queen. During her speech in Islamabad, the Queen was scrupulous in avoiding any mention of the Kashmir issue.

The façade of cohesion was sorely tested on several occasions during the Thatcher Government. *The Sunday Times* suggested in 1986 that the Queen was deeply at odds with Mrs Thatcher's style of government, which she felt was dividing the country. The Queen's press secretary, Michael Shea, said it was a complete misrepresentation of a private briefing. No official statement ensued.

The Queen's aides also remained silent about "ditty eyes", the Duke of Edinburgh's injudicious aside in China the same year. It was left to the Chinese to state that they were not aware that he had said any such thing.

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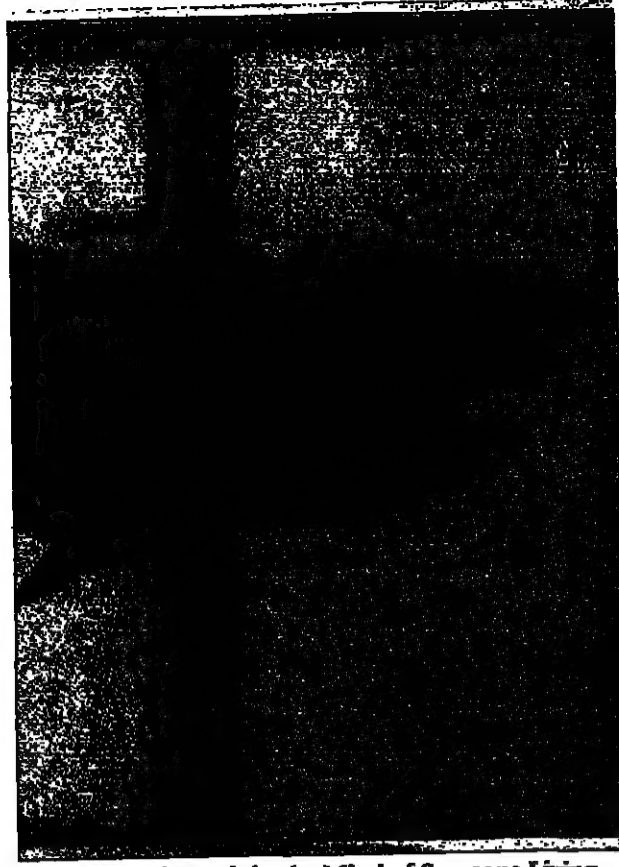
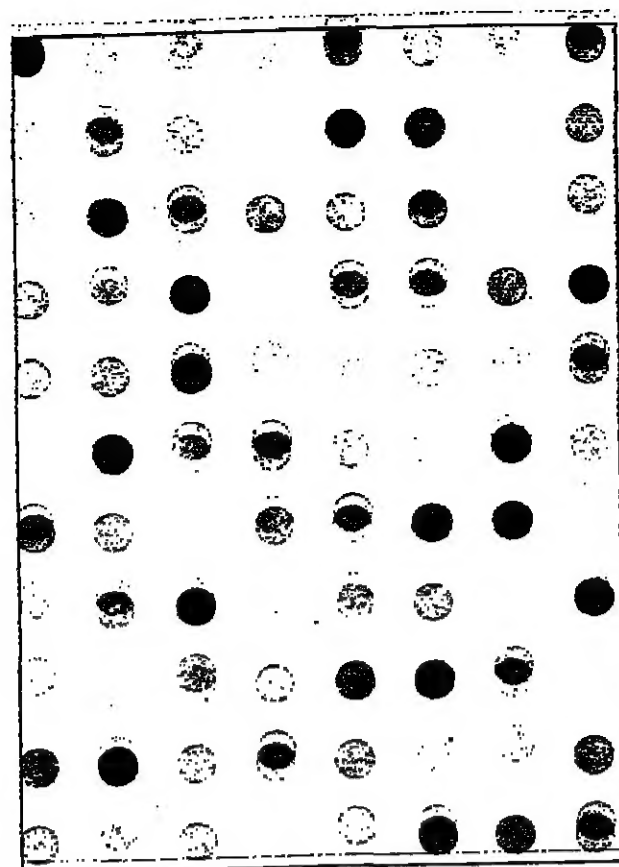
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Damien Hirst's *Acetic Anhydride*, left, and *Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*

Marcus Harvey's *Myra*, left, which was physically attacked at the Royal Academy, and *Reader's Wife I*

Not much to it?

I'm impressed?

All right?

Excellent line work?



David Wood: his own works sell by the square foot

A mild-mannered art master has disclosed that he was the teacher who unleashed Britain's two most notorious young artists, Damien Hirst and Marcus Harvey, on to the world.

David Wood, 60, has also unburied his most guilty secret: he once borrowed some jars of preserved animal remains from the biology laboratory for a still-life lesson with Hirst, the artist who grew up to become best-known for his obsession with pickling dead sheep, sharks and cattle in tanks of formaldehyde.

Harvey's most controversial work is the giant painting of *Myra Hindley*, created from a child's handprints, which is now back on display at the Royal Academy after restoration from objectors' attacks with ink and eggs.

The young artists, who both attended Allerton Grange Comprehensive in north Leeds at the turn of the 1980s, have become the gruesome two-some of "Britart", with several works now hanging in the Royal Academy's *Sensation* exhibition. In addition to his

Dominic Kennedy on an academic view of British art's gruesome two



Harvey, left, and Hirst: pupils with a hint of drama

rotting animal carcasses, Hirst, now 32, has created nude family self-portraits and paintings of coloured spots. Harvey, 34, has confronted gallery-goers with his large, colourful paintings of women's genitalia. He once chose a lavatory roll as a subject for a still life.

But to Mr Wood, the *enfants terribles* of the art world will always be just *enfants*, making pottery and agreeing to join in the school plays he directed. He said: "I am not

surprised, to be honest, that Damien made it, because he always had an unconventional streak. Marcus was a little more of a surprise, but he was always a worker."

Hirst's first pleased crowds in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the end-of-year play. "He played Bottom," said Mr Wood.

"I had to twist his arm a little bit. Once he realised it was a part he could go to town on, he was in his element." Harvey played in a school

production of Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. He liked to be helpful and used to visit Mr Wood's home in Dewsbury to paint scenery for plays staged by the town's arts group.

Although Harvey is two years older than Hirst, his brother, Miles, now an actor, was in the same year as Hirst and was one of his closest friends at school. The two budding artists went on to study at Jacob Kramer College in Leeds.

Hirst is still remembered for his request to visit the city mortuary. He allowed himself to be photographed, smiling, next to the head of a corpse.

Hirst was short-listed for the Turner Prize at 27. Harvey struggled until he was invited to display at Hirst's 1994 exhibition *Some Went Mad, Some Ran Away*, at the Serpentine Gallery, Hyde Park.

Hirst tried to persuade his old school friend to submit something more suitable for a Royal Park than *Pearl Necklace*, which depicts part of a

woman's anatomy, but Harvey refused to budge. His work *Myra*, first exhibited in 1995, was bought by Charles Saatchi for £10,000.

Mr Wood, who still teaches part-time, admires most of their work. "I am still impressed by the shark," he said of Hirst's construction, grandly titled *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*. "Many, many years ago we did draw things in jars. We got some specimens from the biology department."

"The coloured spots [Hirst's *Acetic Anhydride*] I find initially very attractive but I don't think there is as much to them."

As for Harvey's paintings *Halfway Up, Reader's Wife I* and *Julie From Hull*, Mr Wood is underwhelmed by their gynaeological subject matter. "I like them," said the father of two. "They are colourful, zippy. The draughtsmanship and his line work are extremely good. The colour is very striking."

Harvey tried nothing like that in sixth form: "If you did this at school, I am sure they

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The woman who is ready to tackle World Cup thugs

ANY British football hooligan planning to disrupt the 1998 World Cup in France faces a formidable, if unexpected, foe. Dominique Spinosi, one-time French volleyball champion, former police official and the woman responsible for maintaining order at the event.

For two years Mme Spinosi, security director of the French World Cup Committee, and Inspector-General René Georges Querry, of the French national police, have been preparing meticulously for the arrival of an estimated 800,000 foreign fans and up to two million French supporters when the World Cup kicks off next June.

Violent, drunken British yobs may represent Mme Spinosi's greatest challenge but, as she concedes, Britain's expertise in dealing with football violence was also her trump card: "Britain invented soccer hooliganism, but they also invented the remedy."

Mme Spinosi is charming, soft-spoken and elegant, but her approach is as tough as the riot police helmet she keeps by her desk at World Cup headquarters in Paris.

The grim scenes at last weekend's qualifying match in Rome had helped to concentrate French officials' minds, she said. "That will not happen here. We are looking very hard at what took place in Rome. We will be ready."

M Querry and Mme Spinosi attended Euro 96 matches in Britain, and their approach to security and crowd control during the World Cup will be directly modelled on British techniques. "We are trying to copy British methods," said Mme Spinosi, a former deputy-prefect of police in Mâcon, who represented France more than 100 times at volleyball.

Under French law, responsibility for preventing violence

The French are sure they can succeed where Roman police failed, reports

Ben Macintyre

now rests squarely with match organisers, rather than simply with the police. Seating will soon be obligatory at all matches and security testing may be erected between stands to prevent missiles being thrown at opposing supporters or officials.

Mme Spinosi is determined to avoid the highly visible, and perhaps provocative, police presence evident in Rome last weekend. Instead, the stadiums will be controlled using a pool of some 18,000 security stewards, one third of whom will be professional security staff and the rest volunteers.

More than 5,000 CRS riot police, with truncheons, helmets and body-armor, will be available should serious violence break out, but unless they are summoned by match organisers they will remain in buses outside the grounds, according to M Querry.

"In Italy it appears that British fans were close to the Italians, with the riot police in between. That was, psychologically, a terrible situation," Mme Spinosi said.

Tickets for the World Cup will be distributed in a "sandwich" pattern: fans for opposing teams at either end of each stadium, with a thick "filling" of French spectators between.

Already a team of more than 50 people is co-ordinating a vast database to establish who

has purchased which tickets, from which country and for which match. Two thirds of the seats will go to French fans, whose names, addresses and bank details will be printed on their tickets. The remainder will be distributed through national football associations, but will be issued only the month before the tournament, to reduce forgery and touting. "No one will get in without a ticket. There will be no touting near the stadiums," M Querry said flatly.

Football in France remains an almost wholly masculine preoccupation, but Mme Spinosi is determined to create a more familial atmosphere next year. "We want to give people the feeling they are going to a celebration, not going to a prison. I'm also going to make sure there are enough toilets for women. That, if you like, is a personal campaign."

Brian Glanville, page 36



Dominique Spinosi and Jules, the French World Cup mascot. She pledged that the police would be ready to counter the threat of hooliganism

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POLICING FRANCE 98



The CRS will be on call outside each stadium

The World Cup finals will be played between June 10 and July 12. The 64 matches will be held at ten venues:

Stade de France, the new stadium in Paris
Parc des Princes, also in Paris
Stade Vélodrome, Marseille
Stade de la Beaujoire, Nantes
Parc Lescure, Bordeaux
Stade Geoffroy-Guichard, St Etienne
Stade de la Mosson, Montpellier
Stade Félix-Bollaert, Lens
Stade Municipal, Toulouse
Stade Gerland, Lyons

The draw for the first round will be held in Marseille on Thursday, December 4. One fifth of the 2.5 million tickets will cost less than £16 and a half will be £27 or less.

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by Baron Philippe de Rothschild



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Why Notting Hill is voice of Britain

The BBC World Service's first soap is based on multiculturalism, writes Carol Midgley

In the days before carnival was fashionable, it was one of the most shunned areas in the country. Now Notting Hill has been chosen as the symbol to represent modern, multicultural Britain in BBC World Service's first soap opera, to be broadcast to 35 million people.

While *EastEnders* has its chirpy cackneys, *Brookside* its scurrilous scoundrels and *Coronation Street* its earthy Northwesters, *Westway* will include a Nigerian GP, a Muslim chemist, a Jamaican receptionist and a Parsi health clinic manager. The soap is intended to be the world's window on Britain, showing it in a radically different light from the popular tourist image of red buses, aid, beateaters. Modelled on Notting Hill, West Kensington and Shepherd's Bush, it will show the rich racial mix of the community and, it is hoped, simultaneously appeal to audiences as far afield as Lagos and Kuala Lumpur. Critics suggest the BBC may be over-representing Britain's ethnic minorities to draw in audiences abroad who want characters with whom to identify. Notting Hill, synonymous with the world famous carnival, is by no means typical, they say, and is populated with more wealthy professionals than ethnic minorities. But the creators insist they want to give other countries a genuine snapshot of inner-city Britain.

As Lord Tebbit was railing against the spread of multiculturalism at a Conservative Party conference fringe meeting, warning that it would lead to social divide, the BBC team were putting the final touches to the drama.

The twice-weekly soap, based around a busy health centre, begins on November 4, with each episode

lasting 15 minutes. It has been researched by the World Service drama unit, which set up focus groups in Lagos and Singapore to listen to sample tapes and give their reactions.

The BBC has invested thousands of pounds hiring leading international writers for the series. Pat Cumper, a Jamaican, has written and produced more than 200 episodes of Jamaica's two main soaps, *Legacy* and *Mahina's Revenge*. Tanika Gupta, who is from a Bengali family, wrote the critically acclaimed play *Voice* in

‘We are not trying to be politically correct, just accurate’

the *Wind for the World* Service's India and Pakistan season, and Annie Caulfield, a regular writer for BBC2's drama *This Life*. A Nigerian doctor is employed as a permanent consultant to the soap, as is a female health centre manager who asked to remain anonymous. The drama, set in fictional Westgrove Park, will also feature the fictional Green Man pub and the St. John's Roman Catholic Church and community centre, both based on real equivalents in West London.

David Hitchison, editor and co-creator of the series, said: "We have taken a lot of trouble to present an accurate picture of contemporary urban life in Britain and we have spent months researching it."

Anne Edyvean, series producer and co-creator, said a Nigerian GP had been picked because the World Service had a huge audience in West Africa, but stressed they had been careful not to have a "one of each" policy. "We are not trying to be politically correct, just accurate. It not meant to be typical of Britain generally, but inner city Britain."

"For instance we have a Muslim chemist who is married to a Hindu

DR MARGARET SAMPSON
Aged 58, senior partner at Westway Health Centre which she set up in 1967 and ran on her own until 1994. Maternal figure from poor West London family. Never married. Played by Jilke Meers.

DR DAVID BOYCE
Aged 43, attention-seeker who has worked at Westway for three years. Married to Jane, another doctor; two children, Ned and Jess. Lazy, intuitive, with touch of brilliance. Played by Nigel Crampton.

DR JOY ONWUKWE
Aged 29, from Lagos, Nigeria. Has lived most of her life outside West Africa. Youngest in a family brought to England for their education. Hardworking and determined. Played by Abi Eniola.

JAMSHED DASTOOR
Aged 35, practice manager. Lost both parents in religious riots in Bombay in late 1960s. "Adopted" by British missionary couple and brought to Scotland. Played by Paul Bazely.

MEL RICHARDSON
Aged 20, part-time receptionist. Still lives at home with her parents and is devoted to her large Jamaican family. Keeps quiet about brother being a policeman. Played by Clare Perkins.

STAFF AT THE WESTWAY HEALTH CENTRE REFLECT THE MULTIRACIAL MIX OF RADIO DRAMA



Canon Ivor Smith-Cameron, above and right, says Notting Hill "is one of the most appropriate places to pick for the soap opera. It is one place which is a sign of hope"



because we want to reflect the fact that there are more mixed marriages in Britain today." She said they had had to be aware of the possibility of storylines offending people from other cultures, such as involving drinking. "Going to the pub is very much part of English life and there is a pub just around the corner from the surgery where we meet the publican and his wife and his sons. To say that people in

London don't go to the pub is ridiculous because they do. To say it's right that everyone goes to the pub would not be the right thing for our international audience. We are trying to reflect life without making a moral judgment."

Ms Cumper said the idea of having a woman as a senior partner had been unpopular in some countries: "In the sub-continent (India, Pakistan and Bangla-

desh) there was some resistance to the idea of a woman being that senior whereas in Africa it went down perfectly comfortably."

Canon Ivor Smith-Cameron, Chaplain to the Queen, and the most senior Asian priest, was chairman of the Notting Hill Social Council in the 1960s when Enoch Powell made his so-called "rivers of blood" speech. He also lived there

in 1959 when Kelso Cochrane, a 32-year-old black carpenter, was stabbed to death in a race attack. He said the area, like many urban communities, had suffered because of racism. Although racism is still prevalent today, Notting Hill and the surrounding area was now a "sign of hope" for successful racial integration, he said.

"I lived in Notting Hill for 15 years. At the time, largely because

of the Kelso Cochrane murder, anyone who wanted to do good works started to gravitate towards Notting Hill and it became a bit of a human zoo. It is a very multicultural place with a high quota of Caribbean, Bengali and African people. I think it is one of the most appropriate places to pick for the soap opera. It is one place which is a sign of hope. The Notting Hill Carnival is the biggest event in Europe."

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Rap embraces the girl next door

"LADIES and gents, dogs, cats and babies/Whoever bit my style. I hope you all get rabies."

Her proper name is Melissa, although you dare not call her that. Her middle name, carefully crafted, is "Misdemeanor". Meet Missy Elliott, America's latest, nicest, shortest, fattest and, in my idiosyncratic view, prettiest rap singer.

Ms Elliott, who is 25, is a phenomenon. In the hard-muscled, male-held, misogynist world of rap, she is a soft-fleshed woman with a dazzling smile.

In a musical world where the message is anti-police, anti-gay and pro-violence, and which is awash with the worst form of sexual bravado, she is a wholesome, cunning clown — the sort of rap girl you can take home to mama.

The *New Yorker* magazine this week called Ms Elliott

TUNKU VARADARAJAN'S
NEW YORK



"the New Negro", describing her as "an inventive amalgamation of past and future trends that are indigenous to black American style". The black assistant in my office puts it just as articulately: "She's new, man, a change from all that poom-poom and the hor' hoochie words those male rappers use."

With only one album, *Supa Dupa Fly*, under her belt, Ms Elliott is being hailed as the re-maker of rap. Known as The Heebaw Girl, for her sly little laugh, she is endearingly immodest about her place in

America's music history. "I'm futuristic," she says. "What people do now, I am in, like, the year 2000, and when that year comes I'll be on something else."

Ms Elliott travels to London next month to promote her record and hit single, *The Rain*. The video that accompanies the song is outrageous, with Ms Elliott thumbing her nose at all the black male stereotypes of the desirable female form. In it, she prances about in a patent leather suit inflated to



Missy Elliott is reinventing the male-dominated world of rap music. She comes to London next month

Michelin Woman proportions by a tyre pump, expressing no rage, no pain and no buttock-thrusting "girl jive".

Not surprisingly, women's groups have embraced her, thanking her for beginning to liberate performing black women from their style-cage of hot pants, tight tops, long "good" hair and abundant lip-gloss. Not only is she now

a "role model", she also has a bank balance as full as her figure. Unlike many musicians who have been rapping and jamming for decades, she even owns her own record

label, called Golden Mind. "I have creative control over all my songs, everything," Ms Elliott says. She is not called The Heebaw Girl for nothing.

Singing Elton's praises

ELTON JOHN'S choice of Ingrid Sischy as ghost writer for his forthcoming "tell-all" autobiography is an inspired one. Known to her admiring legions here as Dishy Sischy, she is the editor of *Interview*, a glossy magazine.

Ms Sischy, a South African-born New Yorker, is cleverer than her magazine, in which she once penned the following snippet of eloquent gush about Mr John: "Once in a while someone like Elton comes along whose story goes way beyond the remarkable to the phenomenal."

"For this to happen there has to be an incredible talent, but also the generosity to show one's true self."

The eulogy, written as a letter from the Editor, runs to more than a thousand words. Mr John, who does not like understatement, is believed to have loved the stuff — truly, madly, deeply.

Robert Kennedy Jr says he was 'born alcoholic'

ROBERT KENNEDY Jr, son of the assassinated senator, will admit something tomorrow which, I fear, America has known for years: the passion for drink is in his blood. "I feel that in many ways, I was born alcoholic. It wasn't something I became," he says. In an interview with CBS television, he reveals he

tells his children that alcoholism is "in their genes". In an interview given in July, Christopher George Kennedy, Robert's brother, said: "It's easier to get an Alcoholic Anonymous meeting together at the family compound in Hyannisport [Massachusetts] than a touch-football team."



Robert Kennedy Jr with his brother Michael, left

A New York Times correction about an article on the Rev Al Sharpton's campaign appearances in support of Ruth Messinger: "In an appearance at a church in Queens, [she] thanked Mr Sharpton for his sensitivity to the people in the city, not only the people whose boats aren't rising with the tide but people who aren't yet even in the boats. She did not refer to 'people whose votes aren't rising with the tide' and 'people who aren't yet even given votes'."

Cursed by running bores

A NEW breed of bore has emerged here these days: the "I'm Going to Run the New York Marathon Bore".

The annual trot takes place early next month and, suddenly, those I had previously regarded as sane epicureans have turned spartan in their approach to life. People one could previously rely on for company over a longish lunch now eat no lunch at all. What is worse, many of them have

forsaken claret for carrot juice. Take the example of my colleague here, Bill Coles, the New York correspondent of *The Sun* who, as an Old Etonian, is the only man on that paper who can say "Phew! What a scorcher!" in Latin.

I asked him to join me for a steak last night and he said: "Sorry, chum. Got to run the marathon. It's bean sprouts and buckwheat tonight."

Clinton calls for renewal of negotiations on Falklands

By GABRIELLA GAMINI IN BUENOS AIRES AND MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

PRESIDENT Clinton said during his three-day visit to Argentina that "two great nations" like Britain and Argentina should renew negotiations to resolve the dispute over sovereignty of the Falkland Islands.

Speaking during a telephone conference with members of the Argentine public on Thursday evening, Mr Clinton said: "Two great nations, who are at the height of economic recovery, showing great responsibility in international matters and working successfully to promote free trade, should solve their outstanding issue through negotiations."

After assurances that both Britain and Argentina were friends of America, he said: "We would say don't spoil something good that we share. Two countries with strong leadership have to try and resolve their problem. This should not be reason for war but for negotiations."

Mike Summers, a leading member of the Falklands Islands Council, said yesterday that Mr Clinton's remarks were predictable for an official visit. His remarks caused no concern in the islands. "Mr Clinton has always rejected the suggestion that America could mediate unless both sides want that, and Britain has made clear that it does not welcome American intervention," he added.

Experts from Argentina and Britain met in July and last month for talks on underwater oil exploration in the joint control zone between the islands and the mainland. A Falkland Islands government representative was at the London talks in September, and yesterday Phyllis Rendell, director of the Falklands oil department, said the talks had been practical and useful.

Mr Clinton's call on to resume talks which broke down with the Falklands conflict in 1982 was made after he

had held several hours of talks with President Menem in Buenos Aires. Señor Menem said he had not asked Mr Clinton to mediate on the sovereignty issue; the President's comments appear to have come after the Argentine leader had urged him to clarify his position.

Guido Di Tella, the Argentine Foreign Minister, said yesterday: "Argentina's aggressive demands are a thing of the past. There will never be war again. We value our improved relations with Britain above everything else and feel as we get closer we may eventually find an agreement on the Malvinas [Argentina's name for the Falklands]."

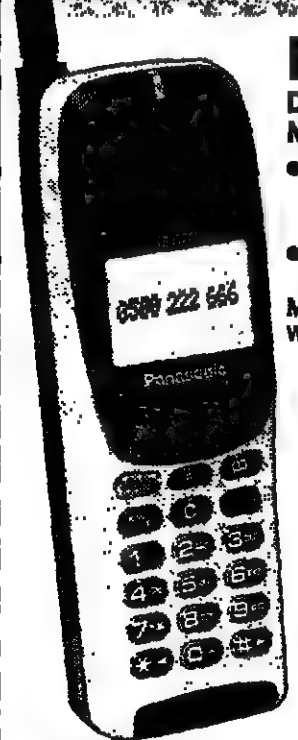
Violent protests against the Clinton visit broke out in central Buenos Aires on Thursday night and led to the arrest of at least 300 protesters who had thrown petrol bombs at banks and shops.

Leading article, page 23

The Link

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French to open archives on 1961 massacre

FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN PARIS

THE French Government has ordered the opening of secret state archives to shed light on the 1961 massacre of more than 200 Algerians in Paris after Maurice Papon, the alleged Nazi collaborator, denied under oath that French police were involved.

M Papon, 57, who is on trial for crimes against humanity in Bordeaux, was the Paris police chief at the height of the Algerian war of independence when scores of Algerian demonstrators were murdered and their bodies thrown into the River Seine. Catherine Trautmann, the Culture Minister, yesterday issued instructions to release state records on the episode. 36 years to the day after the massacre and two days after M Papon, testifying on his past career, insisted in court that police under his command had played no role in the killings.

The archives, believed to include recordings of police radio conversations, would normally remain sealed for 60 years. Witnesses claim that police opened fire on thousands of Algerian demonstrators who had been herded into a stadium. At least 50 people are believed to have been murdered at the Paris police headquarters.

Dozens of bodies were retrieved from the Seine and many more were dumped at sea, according to historians. The massacre was hushed up, and the official death toll still stands at just three people.

M Papon, in testimony that has dramatically shifted the focus of his trial from the Second World War deportation of Jews to a more recent tragedy, conceded there had been more deaths than officially acknowledged, but said that these were the work of rival Algerian groups.

But Raoul Lertud, who was a young policeman in 1961, told *Express* magazine how he had taken part in the killing of Algerians on the understanding that M Papon would never allow any officer to be prosecuted.

Party's over for power hostess

Sally Quinn is pining for the great days of the Washington elite salon circuit. Tom Rhodes reports

describe her as a hostess; you would say she was a publisher, a writer, a great woman," says Ms Quinn.

"I thought it could not get more boring after George Bush left. The Republicans had been in office so long but oddly enough, this much younger Administration of Democrats, an Administration one would have thought would have been a lot more lively and exciting, just isn't."

Legendary Washington hostesses have included Perle Mesta, Gwen Caffritz and Alice Langworth Roosevelt, the daughter of Teddy Roosevelt. They all viewed entertainment as a way of life and a means of becoming a conduit for power. Apart from President and Hillary Clinton, who entertain more than anyone in Washington, parties given by Katharine Graham are now considered the only functions that should never be achieved.

People don't go out anymore. I love meeting congressmen and senators and people from the White House. I think it's always fun and I think a lot of people feel sort of bereft. You go to parties and you see the same old pals every night but you're not learning anything new. Ms Quinn has never had an easy relationship with the current Administration.

During the first term she and her husband were studiously snubbed by the Clintons, whom Ms Quinn had written about in a "condescending manner" during the election campaign. Her critics argue that she feels left out of the loop and so claims there is no social circle in Washington anymore. There is no doubt, however, that life is changing. As many as ten of the "going out" senators retired this year.

Congressmen spend more time in their constituencies, people work harder and simply know each other less.

"It's quite interesting that they feel completely isolated up there on the Hill," she says. "They don't ever see any of the White House people, and so the antagonism starts. You don't know that you both had children at the hospital at the same time having surgery, or that somebody's daughter has a stroke. You don't know the human things that make them seem less like ogres."

The vacuum has clearly had an effect on Ms Quinn, the daughter of a general who later worked as a social secretary to the Algerian Ambassador before covering social events for the *Style* section of *The Washington Post*. Her latest volume, in effect a rulebook for correct entertaining, is spattered with nostalgic anecdotes of a social life that no longer exists. She reminisces about the famous parties held by Evangeline Bruce, at which the hostess would invite people for lunch but serve only hors d'oeuvres.

At one such function, no one had informed the guest of honour, Princess Margaret, that there was no actual meal as she drank copious amounts of bourbon. "When do you think lunch will be served?" Ashton Hawkins, the Vice-President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Princess's escort, asked Ms Quinn. "I'm starving and so is she."

"He looked desperately in the direction of Princess Margaret, who was accepting another drink and who at that moment was taking my husband by the arm and removing him to a sofa in the far corner of the room, where they sat for nearly another hour alone. That's it," said Ben on the way home. "No more stand-up seaweed lunches for me."



Sally Quinn, Washington's "ultimate insider". She bemoans the current social inertia, blaming the Clinton Administration. "People just don't go out anymore"

the writer, and her husband Carl Bernstein, the Watergate reporter who was having an affair with Margaret Jay, wife of the then British Ambassador and the daughter of the Prime Minister, James Callaghan. "As we began innocently talking about how it was impossible not to know if your spouse was having an affair, Nora stood up, asked for a bottle of red wine and poured it over Carl's head."

Her book launch on Monday will be hosted by Bob Woodward, the other half of the Watergate duo, and his wife, Elsa Walsh. Many of the guests have yet to reply, sighed Ms Quinn, but that is a symptom of the decline. Her advice for the Washington "hostess" of the 1990s? "Get a job and then you can try to entertain on the side."

While many of her stories involve the protocol of entertaining, the setting, the menus and the seating arrangements, she also writes of some embarrassing moments at her own home. The dinner, for example, when she had invited Nora Ephron,

The Party, A Guide to Adventurous Entertaining, is published by Simon & Schuster.

Russia 'to rely more on nuclear arsenal'

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX
IN WASHINGTON

RUSSIA plans to cut its ground forces by half, relying instead on nuclear weapons in future conflicts, according to reports here yesterday.

A classified document says that Russia's new military tactics will be approved later this year, according to *The Washington Times*, a right-wing newspaper with a reputation for close links to the intelligence forces.

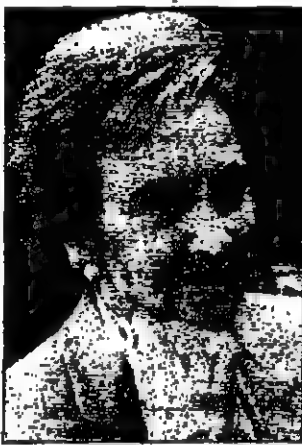
The proposed reforms reinforce changes already under way in Russia's nuclear doctrine by placing increasing weight on nuclear weapons to deter aggression, says the "top secret" report from the Joint Intelligence Committee, an international group for pooling intelligence reports from the United States, Britain, Canada and Australia.

The newspaper said the report was made available by Pentagon sources. The report says: "Russia will maintain a credible strategic deterrent to compensate for the weaknesses in its conventional forces."

Many in the Russian military believe that it is motivated mainly by the Government's desperate need to save money. Defence spending, now at 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product, has been cut by half in the past five years, the report says.

Despite the rapid deterioration of conventional forces, Russia is developing a new intercontinental ballistic missile to replace the SS25 mobile version, and a new class of submarines.

□ Moscow: Russian experts shrugged off the report as nothing new, saying it was well known that economic woes had made such a shift unavoidable. (Reuters)



Katharine Graham, left, and Pamela Harrison

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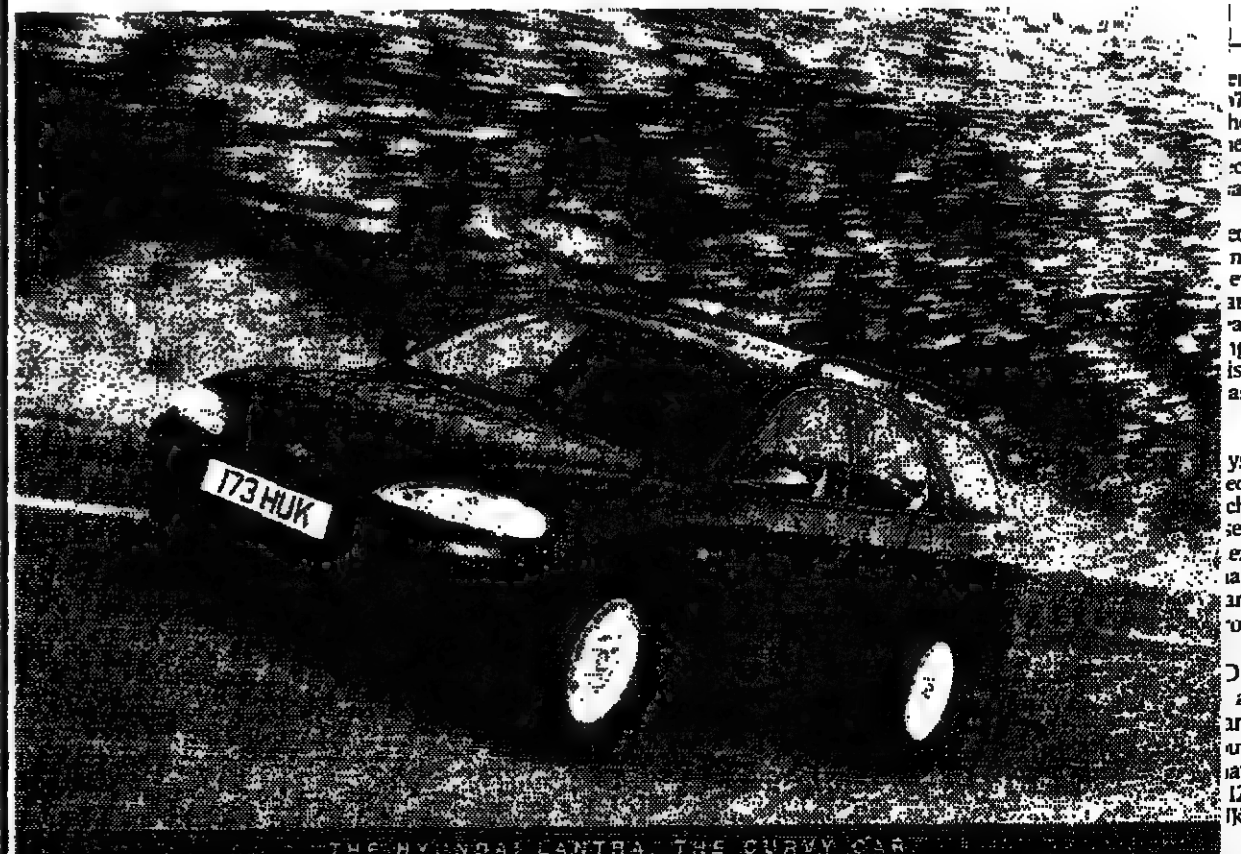
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Malibu villa of Dodi Fayed on sale for \$10m

PEERING over a hedge into the drive, a giraffe sculpted from ivy and encased in wire mesh stands silent sentinel at the beachfront mansion that was briefly owned by Dodi Fayed and is now for sale.

This secluded villa has six bedrooms and five acres of prime gardens set around a swimming pool, a tennis court and a long brick staircase that leads to the sea. Offers in the region of \$10 million (£6.2 million) should be addressed to Sotheby's International Realty in Beverly Hills.

The brochure has yet to be printed. Sotheby's gets these listings by promising it will do a lavish spread. Libby Sparks, a Malibu estate agent, said she showed prospective buyers the property when Julie Andrews and Blake Edwards first tried to sell it in the late 1980s. Sotheby's had no comment on the villa where Diana, Princess of Wales, might have made a home.

Giles Whittell
says the Princess
would have been
safe here from
the paparazzi

Bought in June by the heir to Mohamed Al Fayed's Harrods fortune for about \$7.3 million, it is being offered four months later, unimproved, for nearly \$3 million more.

Kelly Fisher, the Californian model, has claimed the younger Fayed asked her to redecorate and refurbish the villa. No new work has been done, not only because of his untimely death, but also because all ties between him and Ms Fisher were cut when she learnt of his relationship with the Princess the previous

month and sued him for \$440,000.

The notion that the villa's current owner may profit from its link to the Princess was rejected by Mrs Sparks, who has bought and sold property in Malibu for more than 20 years: "Someone may want to buy it because of its history, but she [the Princess] never lived here. I don't see the allure." The asking price, she added, was "probably a little high. But it's a beautiful piece of property and if you don't ask \$10 million you certainly won't get it."

Hidden from the Pacific Coast Highway and even from its nearest neighbour, the mansion was razed when Edward Sacks, a Florida investor, bought it from Ms Andrews and Mr Edwards for \$8.5 million in 1992. It was rebuilt by Ron Wilson, designer of no fewer than 20 homes for Cher.

It has two drives, a fountain



The secluded beachfront villa, which boasts the loveliest stretch of sand in southern California, has six bedrooms and is set in five acres

in the middle of one of them and 10ft wrought-iron gates. Behind them, mature trees dwarf the giraffe but give a glimpse of terracotta roof tiles on the 2,000sq ft guest house, which has spectacular views

of Catalina Island and the Pacific Ocean. There is also a walled garden.

The chief attraction is the private beach. There can be no lovelier stretch of sand in southern California, nor any

better illustration of the perennial need of wealth to shield itself from prying eyes.

All roads in Paradise Cove are private. One gives public access to the beach, but to walk down it costs \$5 to drive,

\$15. At the bottom there is a list of eight prohibited activities, from surfing and fishing to bringing a dog. It is possible to reach the bottom of the steps leading to the beach from Dodi Fayed's dream house, but

only by waiting for low tide or swimming. One thing is certain. Unless the paparazzi were prepared to maintain a permanent flotilla off the coast, the Princess would not have been hounded here.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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'He could drink and philander with the best of them. All he needed was a seat in parliament ...' John Mortimer on Sheridan. Books

Washington to put a designer wrap around Monument

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

THE Washington Monument, the 555ft-high white needle which dominates the capital's skyline, will be draped in an architect-designed veil for three years while urgently needed repairs are carried out.

Like the Albert Memorial in London, which has been shielded in a designer shroud to protect its fragile structure from the rain, the Washington Monument will have the fruits of the best minds of the architectural profession to enable it to carry off its refurbishment in style.

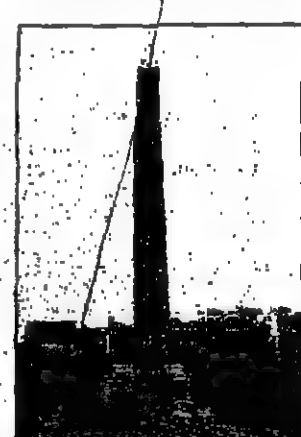
The postmodern architect, Michael Graves, has designed a transparent veil imprinted with a grid of thin blue lines to mimic the masonry underneath, a structure described yesterday by *The Washington Post* as "a splashy, high-tech hair net".

Mr Graves is probably best known for his design of the Walt Disney headquarters in Burbank, California, where the Seven Dwarfs form its pillars. This latest design, which avoids that levity, has had to win approval from a congressional panel. At night, it will be lit from within. The repair work will last until 2000.

The National Park Service, which says it is "excited" by

the design, has been desperate to avoid erecting the scaffolding and rain-stained tarpaulins which usually accompany such large-scale restorations. The smooth spike of the monument, opposite the White House, pierces the two-mile grassy avenue of the Mall, running from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial.

A monument to George Washington, the first American President, it was completed in 1888, 99 years after his death. According to its guides, it is still the tallest free-standing masonry building in the world.



The Monument repairs

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THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Without hope, a 'man of evil' waits for his new sanctuary

By SIMON FREEMAN

IT DID not take long for George Smith, veteran detective, to decide that the cowed figure demanding sanctuary was irredeemably bad. "I have met evil people who would stick a knife into you without a second thought, but there was something different about this man. A blankness, an absence of remorse. I would not leave him alone for one minute with a child. He is very, very dangerous."

Mr Smith, 46, a detective chief inspector after 28 years in the force, had already read the confidential files on Robert Oliver, 43 years old, convicted paedophile and killer, before he slunk into Brighton police station on Tuesday evening, exhausted and afraid that he would be beaten up, or worse, by a member of the public driven beyond tolerance by the headlines saying that a monster was roaming the streets in search of young victims.

These reports were not encouraging. Police officers, who had questioned Oliver over the years about assaults and rapes, and psychiatrists who had tried to understand what drove a man to inflict such terrible pain on the young, had reached an unusual consensus. Even today's university educated and sophisticated senior police officers instinctively divide humanity into the good and the bad — if they did not, then they would not be able to function — while psychiatrists tend to avoid such simplicities and talk about "personality disorders" and "psychoses" to try to explain why ostensibly sane people rape and kill.

In Oliver's case, police and medical profession agreed: he was beyond salvation.

Nonetheless, Smith was still shocked when Oliver began to talk. "He described his previous offences against children. He went into detail about the sex. He said, 'This is what happened and it was not my fault'. He just did not see that he had done anything wrong."

Oliver's appearance in Brighton police station, a stroll from the beaches by the Palace Pier where young homeless males traditionally congregate in the summer, was the latest twist in the surreal odyssey that began in late September, when he was released from Wandsworth

prison after serving ten years of a 15-year sentence for his part in the 1985 death of 14-year-old Jason Swift, who was drugged, raped by up to 12 men, killed and his body dumped in the Essex countryside.

Oliver has become the modern equivalent of a tribal outcast: he has moved from London to Swindon, back to London, over to Dublin, across to Manchester and then south — courtesy of a rail warrant provided by the police — to Brighton. He cut his straggly hair and began to grow a beard in an effort to shake off his pursuers, but was tracked relentlessly by the media, as if he were carrying a lethal virus. The Sun was incandescent that he was free

and, beneath a headline which announced that Oliver had vowed to assault and kill "a gypsy boy," asked readers to telephone an emergency number if they spotted him.

Though he is an estimable individual, he has raised perplexing questions about a civilised society's reaction to habitual sex offenders who are not insane and so cannot be shut away forever, but who also cannot be cured.

Today the police and probation service in Brighton are still unsure what will happen to Oliver, staying voluntarily in a police cell somewhere in Sussex. They are trying to persuade one of Britain's few centres specialising in the treatment of sex offenders to take him but are not optimistic because he is such a notorious figure and his presence would threaten these institutions, which try to remain as anonymous as possible; nor is it clear who would pay even if Oliver could be placed.

Penny Buller, chief probation officer for East Sussex, said that Oliver could not stay in a police cell for the rest of his life. This was a uniquely difficult case yet, she thought, there were slivers of hope because Oliver, who had shown little interest in being treated when he was in prison, now realised that he could not survive without help.

That meant, she added, that a psychiatric hospital might take him, though they usually admitted only those deemed unfit to stand trial.

"We are having to feel our way," she said. "Who will take him? Who will help him and make sure that he is not a threat to children?"

Meanwhile, the debate has widened: should the Robert Oliver of the world be castrated chemically; should they be imprisoned indefinitely — not because of what they have done but because of what they might do? — or should they be allowed to carry on until they rape and kill again, because that is the price of justice?

Brighton did not react well to the news that Oliver had arrived. Reporters poured into the town while many others — parents, teachers and local MPs — said that it was shameful that such a paedophile should be released



Buller: says stability and vigilance are vital



Oliver: case has raised perplexing questions



Mrs B was spat upon and her windows pelted with bricks for giving evidence in a murder trial. She was forced to seek police protection

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

Driven from home for telling the truth

WHILE Robert Oliver is driven from town to town by a concerned public, witnesses too can be hounded from their homes. For daring to tell a murder jury what she saw when a young man was killed outside her front door, Mrs B was spat upon, labelled a grass and had her windows pelted with bricks.

That was only a warning. The neighbours' children threatened to burn her house down. They repeatedly loosed the front wheel of her boyfriend's car on the passenger side, so it would crash and injure her. Mrs B defied them and gave evidence,

helping to ensure that two young men, aged 17 and 18, were jailed indefinitely for murder. Three youths were detained for lesser offences.

But, with five other families, she was forced to flee from the Marquess Road estate in Islington, North London, where she lived in a three-bedroom house. She has been sheltered by the police Witness Prot-

ection Scheme for the past year, spending the first six months sharing a bed with her teenage daughter in a bed-and-breakfast hostel. They lived on lakeaways because there was no cooker. Her dogs were put in kennels and her belongings in storage.

She is suing Islington to demand a suitable home, but nevertheless insists that she would testify again. She

knew the sister of Scott McMullins, the 20-year-old murder victim. "I heard screaming outside. I looked out of the window and saw five youths kicking Scott's head. He was dead when they were kicking him. He had died from the first stab wound because it went straight into his heart. They broke his jaw, his nose, every bone in his body."

"I screamed at them to leave him alone. They looked me straight in the face and I knew every one of them. I have known them all their lives."

The fatal fight was over some yoghurt which Scott's 12-year-old brother, Charlie, was supposed to have flicked at someone.



Headline target: the press has tracked Oliver across the country since his release

extreme to another," she said. "No interest in paedophiles, and then this. And once Oliver has gone, everyone will say, great, and relax again. But that is no good because we need stability and vigilance."

She said that she understood why Oliver had attracted such attention, but, she added, there were between 20 to 30 paedophiles under her department's supervision in Brighton who could be portrayed with almost equal ferocity by the press. She had no

intention of saying more. "Publicity scares people and makes it difficult for us to find secure accommodation for the paedophiles. And that, in turn, can drive them underground, which is dangerous."

It would have been different, if Oliver had been sentenced after autumn 1992, because sex offenders who were convicted after that date are now obliged to accept supervision when they are freed. This can range from relaxed monitor-

ing by probation officers to being forced to live in a secure hostel and facing an instant return to prison at the first signs of recidivism.

Oliver is covered by the new Sex Offenders Act, which allows the authorities to issue warning bulletins about men like him, although many police and probation officers argue that such public denunciations are counterproductive because they cause panic and force the paedophile to disappear.

But no one has any instant solutions. One forensic psychiatrist said that drugs which reduced a person's sex drive, the so-called castration option, did not always work and, in any case, men such as Oliver were often driven by sadism as much as by sexual energy and might well be just as aggressive, even if they were physically neutered.

It was also a sad fact, said the psychiatrist, that paedophiles tended to have complex personality disorders which could be controlled by regular therapy but could never be cured.

There are other possibilities, such as changing the law so that serial sex offenders such as Oliver faced indefinite detention until they satisfied the experts that they had changed. Penny Buller said: "If the community won't accept these people, then perhaps the courts should change their sentencing policy. But we have to face the fact that society does not know what to do with people like Oliver."

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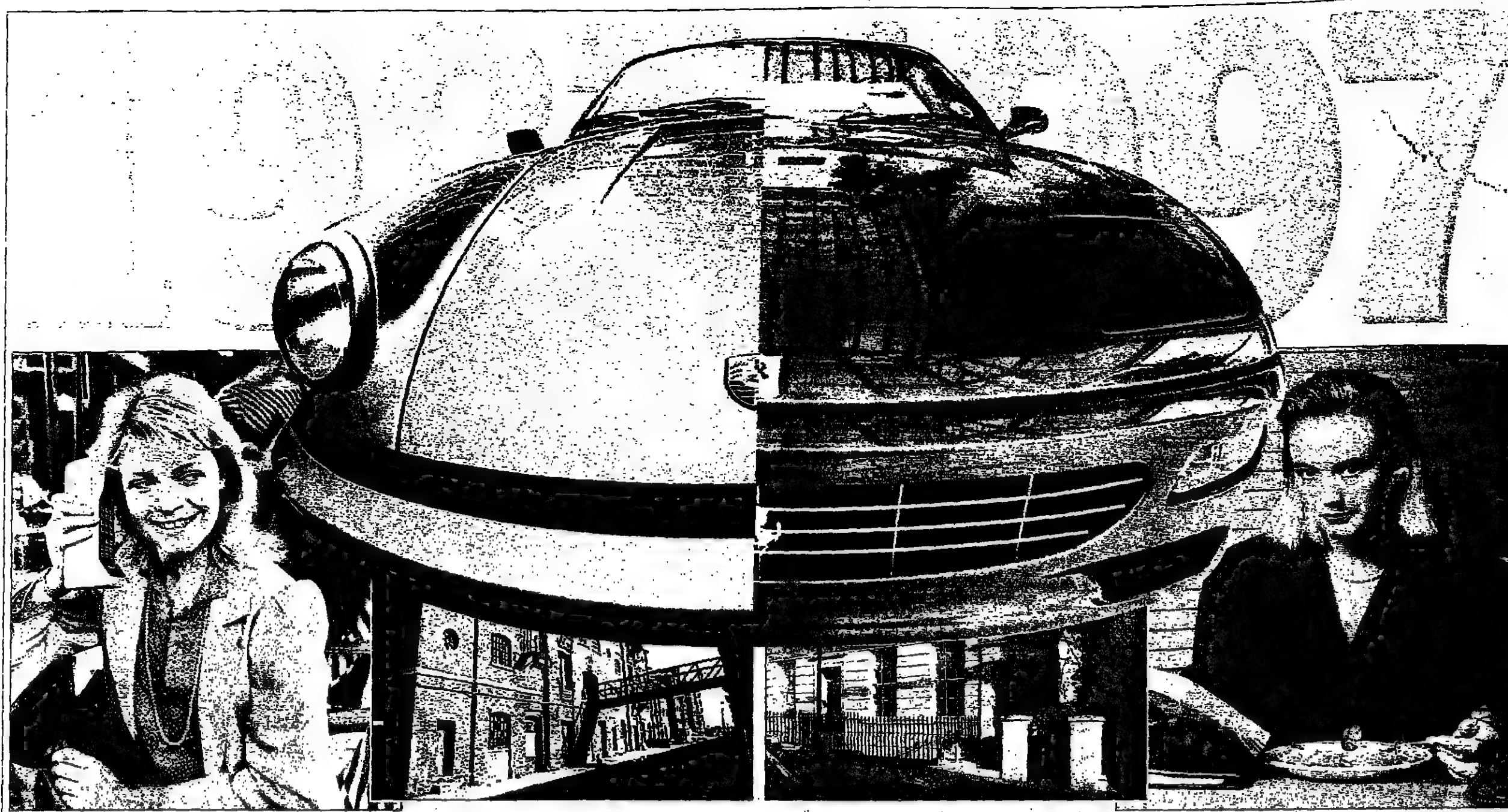
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Good times are back in the Square Mile. Almost ten years after Black Monday, when the stock market plunged 11 per cent and wiped billions of pounds off shares, big bonuses, fast cars and even faster lifestyles have returned to the City.

Successive years of strong stock markets on both sides of the Atlantic have lined the pockets of London's banks and investment houses, and much of the filthy lucre has been paid to employees. Recent Labour research shows that 35 directors of British companies took home more than £1 million in the past year, with bankers and money managers at the top of the list.

Inevitably, attention has focused on certain individuals, such as Carol Galley, the 43-year-old vice-president of the blue-chip investment house Mercury Asset Management, who earned £5.44 million including share options. But most people in the City have had a taste of the rewards, with six-figure bonuses not unusual at some of the bigger houses. Golden handshakes, hellos and handoffs are there for the taking.

This year has been particularly lucrative. Many investment banks have shared in the spoils from the conversion of

building societies, which created 16 million new shareholders and pumped £36 billion into the economy. Stockbrokers reported more business than they could handle as people rushed to cash in their windfall shares.

Even big corporate deals have made a comeback. Mergers hit the markets on Monday, as no fewer than four international deals were struck, with a combined value of £67 billion. The news sent the stock market into orbit, ensuring a double killing for the investment banks.

Yet although the rewards are equal to those of 1987, when young men in braces raced around the City in Porsches and shouted into mobile telephones, the recipients are spending their money more carefully. Loans money has given way to cautious investment.

"It's the same in the City, but it's different too," one seasoned hand with more than 30 years' experience of working in the markets said. "In the 1980s, if you had money for champagne, you would be

City boom is a real bonus

Richard Miles takes stock as the good times return to the Square Mile

forced to spend it at lunchtime. Not now. Alcohol is out, at least during the day. Lunch is for wimps, and some banks include a ban on drinking in their employment contracts. Executives returning to their

offices with sandwiches are affectionately known as "brown baggers". Bar-room antics are restricted to the evening.

"The death of the power lunch has just moved the

drinking back four hours," a stockbroker says. Much of the bonus money has been invested in housing, helping to push up prices in London and the South East. Chelsea and Kensington have proved especially

popular, with large country houses in the Home Counties also being much in demand. Estate agents report young couples paying as much as £400,000 in cash for a property. City executives also seem

more generous, reflecting a changed mood since Labour's victory at the polls.

A charity dinner at the Savoy Hotel on Wednesday night, attended by 400 high-flyers from the Square Mile, raised £300,000. Guests at the same event in 1988 could muster "little more than £50,000 between them."

David McDonough, who organised and chaired the event, says City folk have become much more sophisticated in how they spend their money. "In the Eighties, it was as if people had been given an expensive toy which they had to show off to their friends. Today, they behave much more discreetly."

Perhaps another reason for their caution is the spate of scandals that have beset banks and investment houses. Nick Leeson single-handedly brought Barings to its knees in 1995 by gambling on derivatives, a complex financial product which even bank chief executives admit they do not understand. Barings had to suffer the humiliation of being sold for just £1 to a Dutch

competitor, and staff realised that they could go from riches to rags overnight.

But while the suits in the City have profited personally from the booming stock markets, Britain plc has not. Barings has not been the only British investment house to fall into the clutches of foreign owners, whether European or American.

Morgan Grenfell is now owned by Deutsche Bank. Germany's biggest bank, Warburgs went to the Swiss; and Smith New Court to the American Merrill Lynch. Barclays is in the midst of selling off its investment bank, leaving Schroder as the only serious indigenous player.

But the question on everyone's lips is: how much longer can the stock market continue to rise? Investors caught out by Black Monday made good their losses within six months, so long as they kept their nerve and held on to their shares. The FTSE 100, the index of leading share prices, has jumped from 1,700 points just after the crash to more than 5,200 today.

Many money managers believe another crash is imminent. If, or when, it happens, the people of the City will come back down to earth.

1987

STATUS SYMBOLS

1997

- Mobile telephones the size of dumb-bells
- Power lunches
- Porsches
- Docklands flats
- Greed is good
- Red braces and tasseled loafers
- Mortgages, gearing and upward mobility
- Top earners making bonuses of £1 million-plus
- Champagne, vodka and nouvelle cuisine
- Cigars
- Claeswitz and Sun Tzu's Art of War
- Paintings by Julian Schnabel

- Computers the size of a spectacle case
- Lunch at your desk
- Ferraris and Jeep Cherokees
- Terraced houses in West London
- Greed, still good, but best kept under your hat
- Prada suits and Gucci shoes without the buckle
- Cash down on houses, renting and downshifting
- Top earners making bonuses of £5 million-plus
- Designer beer, burgundies and Italian food
- Cigars
- The musings of Bill Gates and Warren Buffett
- Nude mannequins by Jake and Dinos Chapman

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Domesday farm has new owner

By SIMON DE BRUKELLES

ONE of Devon's oldest inhabited houses has been sold for only the third time since 1219.

The working farm near South Molton is recorded in the Domesday Book, where its 12 cattle, eight pigs and 41 sheep were valued at 30 shillings. This week, the farmhouse, 136 acres and its present-day stock of 22 cows and 350 sheep changed hands for £375,000.

John and Sheila Manley put the farm on the market after the death of Mrs Manley's mother, who had lived in the house all her life. Records of the farmhouse at South Yarde

Farm show that, in 1219, it was owned by the Yarde family, who sold it in 1615 to one Richard Shortridge after a matrimonial dispute. By 1750, ownership had passed to a Rev Southcombe of Rose Ash, whose descendants leased the farm to a succession of tenants until 1910, when the tenancy was taken over by John Rolle, Mrs Manley's grandfather. The second public sale occurred in 1962 when her father, Henry, bought it.

The house and land were bought as a working farm by Gerald Ratcliff. "The history is a wonderful bonus," he said.

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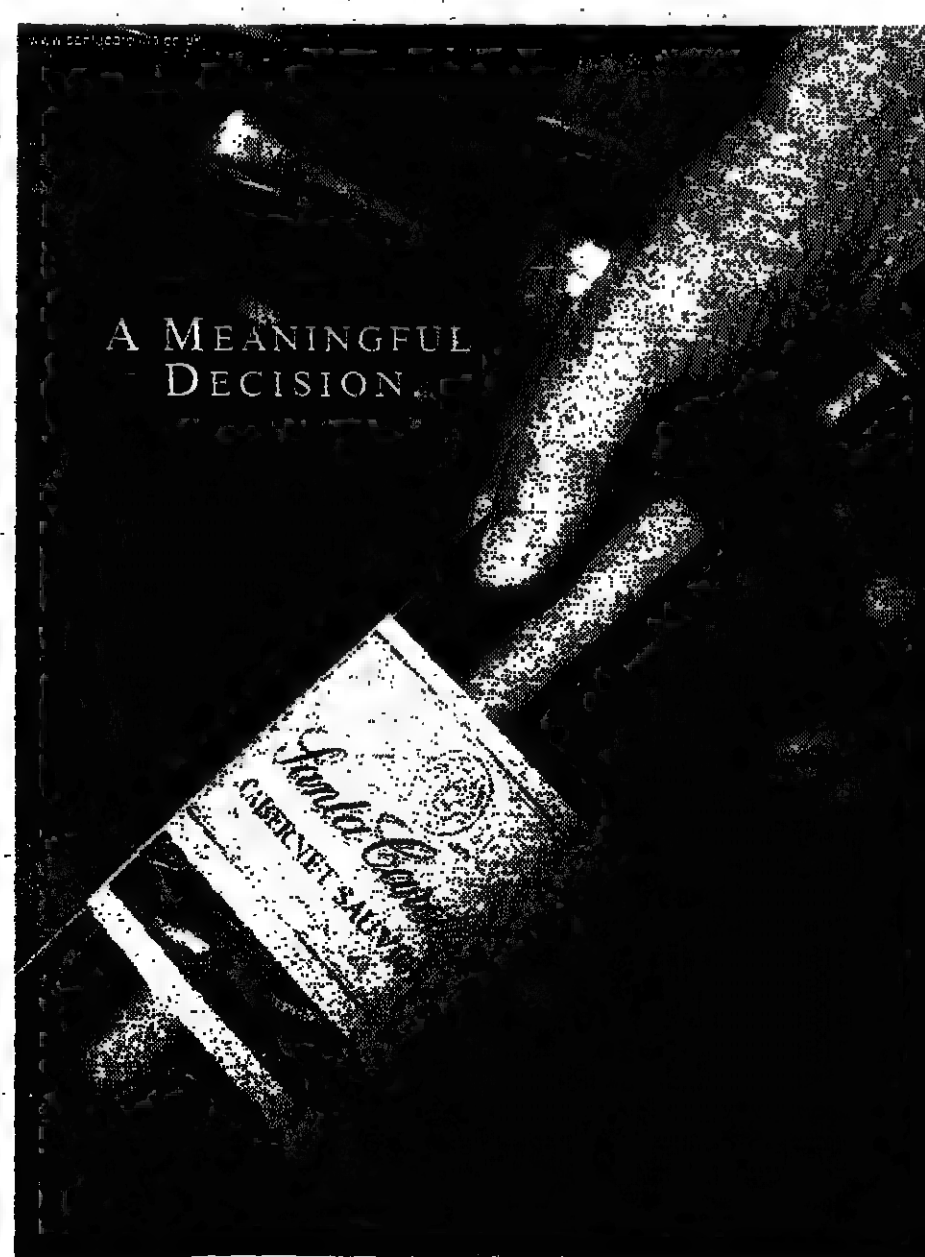
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WINES WITH MEANING

Mrs Osborne looks back

Here sits Helen Osborne, surrounded by her legacy from John: lovely old house, three dogs, Welsh pony, 30 acres of wooded hillside, and a smattering of anger.

Yesterday we heard that she has authorised a biography of her husband which will include his most private writings which nobody has read before — "unconquered outpourings, internal jottings" which reveal a tortured, suffering soul.

Last weekend she delivered a diatribe worthy of Osborne himself — "How the literary vultures picked my husband's bones" in *The Sunday Telegraph*, inspired by the *Daily Mail* serialisation (headlined "The Man Who Hated Women") of a forthcoming book: "unauthorised, unsparring, explosive".

The *Mail* stuff was indeed awful: tabloids' sentences such as: "A dandy, Osborne treasured a wardrobe of at least a dozen suits." And: "While cheating on his third wife, Penelope Gilliat, Osborne enjoyed a career in blonde Jill Bennett's bed."

Surely Peter Whitebrook, theatre critic on *The Scotsman*, did not write this travesty: serialisations rarely reflect a writer's style. But Mrs Osborne, who was assured by Whitebrook that he was producing a serious study of her husband's work, says that much of his manuscript was scissors-and-pasted from Osborne's memoirs, *A Better Class of Person* and *Almost A Gentleman*.

Hence her release of the notebooks, an even more confessional layer of Osborne than we enjoyed in those two classic volumes of autobiography.

The notebooks were never intended for publication, but they were always lying around, and he would say, "This is my life in there." He kept secrets from me: we were peas in a pod.

She has shown them to her chosen biographer — John Hellen, once an *Observer* colleague of hers, now based in New York, whose book on Peter Brook she admired. "I'm sure he's the right person: he understands a writer's complications, he knows about the theatre, and John made him laugh."

It was one of the most interesting things about Osborne that he ended up with a fifth wife so different from his exes, a gamine, wily, figure without vanity, or pretension: stick-thin, plain-spoken, chain-smoking, funny, a helpmeet (companion, idea-splainer, typist, cook) so averse to the notion of supervoman that she and Penny Mortimer, wife of John, started a lunch club for "Washout Wives" as an antidote to the energetic achievements of Dr Miriam Stoppard.

Helen Dawson came from Newcastle upon Tyne, went to boarding school in Yorkshire, read history at Durham, and spent a year at Brown in the United States. She met Osborne when working on *The Observer* arts pages, and had to wait for him "to extricate himself

Maybe his notes

will show people just

how hard the act of

creation is, says the

playwright's widow



Valerie Grove

from Madam" (Jill Bennett). "I just totally loved him. I knew it was absolutely right for me, and right for him. We got on. We were like a pair of old shoes really. I just wish it had gone on longer."

They had 19 years: Osborne was just 65 when he died on Christmas Eve 1994.

The idea of a biographer taking on a subject without private material, writing through the eyes of friends and enemies or from the subject's own published version, makes the whole thing merely speculative.

When I undertook a playwright's life, Dodie Smith had already told her own story in four volumes. Without her private notebooks I would have known nothing: there she poured out her wretchedness — about her fading popularity, seven unperformed plays lying in a drawer when Osborne and Co changed the face of English theatre.

Playwrights have a special paranoia: everything hinges on one night's performance; anxiety and furies consume them. "All the playwrights I know," Osborne said, "go to bed with depression: some for months."

Since they spend most of their days in solitude, they write down every thought, especially when the black dog of depression seizes hold — and as Osborne said, much of the 1970s were "a black hole". It was "like being in an iron suit". This, Helen says, is the point of releasing the notebooks.

"Maybe it will show people just how bloody hard the act of creation is," Helen says. "The hard slog and solitariness of it. If you're any good, that's what it's like."

Osborne was depressed by the

fear of failure, waning powers, lack of creativity, the way of the world. Helen was forced to cancel his 60th birthday party: he just could not face it.

Yet at his summer parties at Christmas Place, in Kent, a genial Osborne would stroll about in his raffish Edwardian stripes. The sun always shone on the broad lawns where a jazz band played, the champagne was unlimited, the food delicious.

The invitations magnanimously allowed guests — from Olivier to the local vicar — to bring anyone: "Mothers-in-law, dogs, kiddies, Australians, *Guardian* winnims welcome."

Queuing for the bathroom one would see, lined up outside the Osbornes' bedroom, the box-files of vituperative correspondence labelled "Loonies", "Lefties", "Law-suits", "Adolf" (Jill Bennett) etc: detritus of a life of tirades, now in the University of Texas.

When the Osbornes moved to Shropshire, people would say they missed his parties. "And I would think," Osborne told me, "well, why don't you give a party then, eh, Harold? Eh, Tom?"

The house in this remote valley, "the quietest places under the sun" as Housman said in *A Shropshire Lad*, is for Helen "a sanctuary from clamour, the clock ticking, the dogs snoring". But it is a big place for a singleton, and expensive to run.

Osborne fell in love with the minute he peered through the window. The previous owners had done a moonlight flit, leaving unwashed dishes in the sink. "It was a bereft house," Helen says. "John loved it and he's all about it still."

"When he knew he was dying, he said, 'You won't leave it, will you? Hang on as long as you can.' But it's jolly tough, the whole business. I don't recommend widowhood. You can talk about it, but it doesn't really help. That's what's so awful."

There is now a possibility that the Arvon Foundation might take over an outbuilding as a centre for aspiring playwrights. "It would be nice for the house to be used. I shall feel like Mrs Danvers, rattling my keys."

At the end of her piece last Sunday was a Helen joke: "The fee from this article is going to the Helen Osborne Survival Fund." As John Osborne said, when asked to waive his 10 per cent royalty on a charity performance on behalf of Friends of the Earth: "What about the Friends of John Osborne?"

Some would say Osborne wrote so unsparringly of other people, he is fair game for anyone else. "What he said about people was based on his experience of them. That's different from writing hearsay about someone you've never met."

Her article attacked other biographers — including Piers and Hilary du Pré: but how can she criticise them for revealing all about Jacqueline, while she publishes Osborne's private notebooks?

"Because John's writings are not

IN OSBORNE PLAYS FOR ENGLAND



Helen Osborne, alone in Shropshire: "It's jolly tough. I don't recommend widowhood"

revealing. They are a writer's thoughts in a period of dreadful, unbearable melancholia. I don't feel it is a betrayal in any sense: it is probably common to some degree in most writers. When he was cheerful, not a word went down. Nobody who knew John well would be surprised at what's in the notebooks."

For an interviewer he was always original, never boring, relished London gossip. Visiting journalists tended to follow a formula: first swank about having the temerity to face the ogre, and then reveal that he was in fact a pussycat as, under the influence of copious champagne, Osborne would prattle on about Colditz-or-Thames (the National Theatre) Dr Fu Manchu (Peter Hall) etc, Great fun. Greatly missed.

Helen is left with the bruising aftermath: hacks digging over old ground, the revelations of Nicholas de Jongh (whose name was pinned



Like two peas in a pod: Helen and John Osborne

up, disbarred from entry, outside Osborne's memorial service) about John's friendship with the homosexual Anthony Crichton, over which Helen lined up with "wife numero uno" Pamela Lane, the only other remaining Mrs Osborne. "Death is not like divorce."

When someone dies, you do go on loving them. People don't grasp this; they think, "Oh well, that's over," and say what they like. It's not like that at all. You just go on loving them, which makes it more painful."

Why not seize a pen and write herself? Her book reviews are excellent. "I wouldn't want to write a mumsy widowish thing about 'What a lovely life we had'... Maybe something like Chekhov's wife's letters written after he died. But I haven't hit on a way to crack it yet."

Osborne's grave is nearby: "It's not a big deal, it's only his bones." But Alice Thomas Ellis, whose husband is also buried not far away, recommended a stonemason near Swansea — who turned out to have done Olivier's stone in Westminster Abbey.

That would have pleased John, whose feelings for Larry "felt just short of idolatry".

Crafty old Fox leads the pack in a tangled power play

EDWARD FOX is our leading gentle walrus and antique sheep, as he proved years ago with his *Edward VIII*, he will give you everything from the right handkerchief to the perfect vowels.

The moment he stumbled onstage, looking like a blend of genteel walrus and antique sheep, and half-quavered, half-moaned something inscrutable about jumping being good for sea-sickness, I knew I would enjoy the evening. Fox is more Harold Macmillan than Macmillan ever was.

Mark you, I am not sure about Hugh Whitmore's play. With Fox's whey-faced Supernac and Clare Higgins's no-nonsense Lady Dorothy pottering among the brown furniture and tweedy portraits of their Scots-castle set, the atmosphere is not exactly electric.

Offstage, Profumo has just tendered his resignation. Onstage, the PM chatters away about everyone from Bobby Salisbury to Jack Kennedy, sometimes to Julian Wadham as his private secretary, sometimes to John Warnaby as the spook who brings revelations of M15's nefarious dealings with

Stephen Ward. Macmillan "represents values like honour, integrity, respect, probity," old Etonian Wadham sniffs assures grammar-school Warnaby.

Yet the PM is not about wangling the prosecution of the wrecked Ward for pinning at a time when it might help his beleaguered Government. But that does not tell us anything surprising about Macmillan, nor, indeed, politicians generally.

Intentionally or not, Whitmore tends rather to perpetuate the Macmillan legend. How could it be otherwise with Fox solemnly exuding sympathy for the Profumo family, nostalgically mourning the Edwardian twilight, and braying out anecdotes about Winston and Duff and Austen Chamberlain? Those old-timers certainly had class. Back in 1963, even class had class.

Is there anything shocking today in the suggestion that Lord Astor, Ward and M15 used Christine Keeler as a honey-trap for the Soviet spy Ivanov, or that Sarah Macmillan, who died in 1970, was an alcoholic and anyway not the mother-figure, sexually inadequate Harold's child? I doubt it.

Yet let's admit that Lady D's affair with raffish Bob Boothby does give the evening some coherence and the lead actor his most touching scenes. In the Profumos' predicament he sees his own, and has to stem a manly tear.

Whatever the merits and demerits of the play, it's a moment that left me feeling wonderfully Foxed.

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How I'll give the law back to the people

Lord Irvine condemns a system open only to the rich and poor

In our manifesto we promised a wide-ranging review of civil justice and legal aid. The previous Conservative administration had been working on reform of the legal aid system driven by a desire to save money. We want reform which will bring the system under control and will deliver benefit to those whose need is greatest; a system which will enjoy the confidence, not the derision, of the public one which operates in the best interests of the whole community, not just in the financial interests of the legal profession.

We have long known that the civil justice system is in need of radical overhaul. At one time it was the envy of all. I want it to be that again. We still have much to be proud of: the quality of our judges; the quality of our courts; the respect throughout the common law world. But we had become complacent.

Delay and procedural complexity, ridiculed by Dickens a century-and-a-half ago, are largely unchecked, despite the attempts to remedy them. Expense can run out of control, the client on a financial rollercoaster. Of themselves these are bad enough. But what if one party is richer than the other? They can exploit every procedural device to add to their opponent's financial woes. And it is not only people of average means who are suffering; business is becoming more and more conscious of the cost of litigation, both in purely financial terms and in terms of management time. Moreover, it is always in one or the other party's interest to prolong the proceedings to the greatest extent: money withheld is money which can be put to other uses.

Lord Woolf, now the Master of the Rolls, spent over two years producing his historic reports on access to justice, together running to more than 600 pages and making more than 300 recommendations to counter the flaws in a system which he characterised as inefficient and ineffective, and one which offers inadequate access to justice.

The essence of Lord Woolf's remedy is much greater judicial involvement in managing cases; a tighter control on time-tables and costs; and more rigorous assessment of what steps really need to be taken. He seeks a climate in which settlement is encouraged; and in which there is a major transfer of control over the length and cost of proceedings from the lawyers to the judges. It is an approach already adopted in some jurisdictions (the United States, Australia); it is being adopted in others (Finland, Japan) and it is not unknown here (the Commercial Court, the Official Referees).

and the early resolution of disputes. Litigation should be a port of last resort. Interlocutory proceedings should be curbed; they are developing into an industry in their own right. The excesses associated with the preparation of witness statements must be brought under control. But in doing what is necessary, we must not jeopardise the existing co-operative relationship between the Bench and the legal profession.

Before adopting Lord Woolf's proposals, I needed to be sure that they would actually deliver what we all hoped for: a civil justice system fit for the 21st century, not the 18th. I wanted an objective view, not to have to rely just on the assumptions of lawyers and civil servants. I wanted to give the enterprise my informed consent. So I asked Sir Peter Middleton, who is completely independent, to undertake his review, looking across the board at the proposals for reform both of the civil justice system and of legal aid. The two must be tackled together because the costs of litigation necessarily reflect the system that is used.

Sir Peter delivered his report to me the week before last. I owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude both for its quality and for the speed with which he worked. I have now considered his recommendations fully, and have been able to reach my own conclusions, which I shall be announcing in my speech in Cardiff this morning.

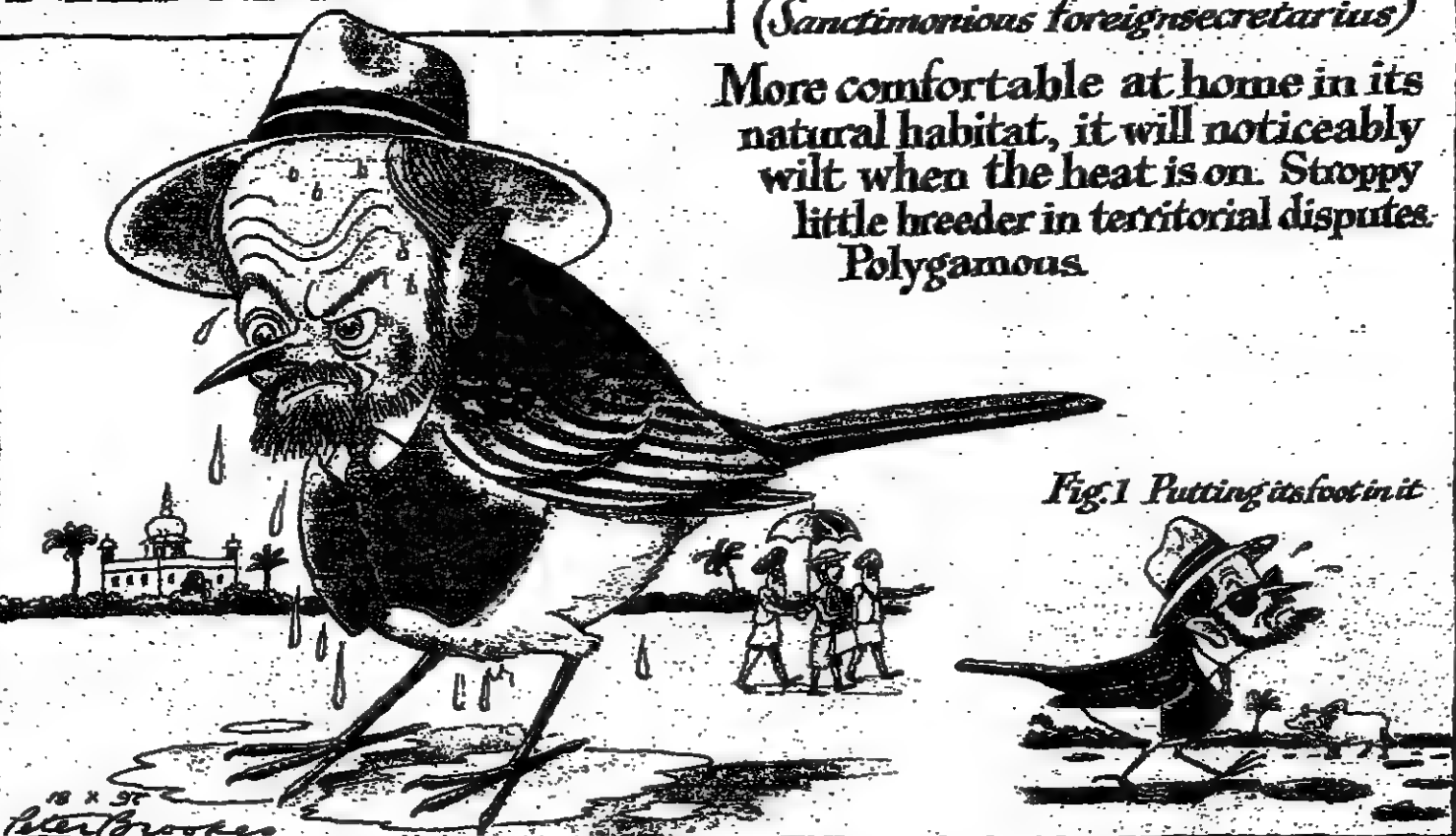
I want to see a streamlined system, bringing costs down, and making the amount of costs much easier to assess in advance. Legal aid has run out of control. For many it has been the key to the court system. But its value was seen to be such that questions should not be asked. The only obligation of a caring government was to foot the bill.

I believe such deference to be misguided. The ever-growing bill for legal aid is paid by all taxpayers, whatever their means. It is provided by society as a whole; it is the Government's responsibility as trustees to ensure that it is put to the best use of society, and that no penny is wasted in pursuing cases which have insufficient prospects of success, or in supporting wasteful practices within the legal profession. Why should anyone on a modest income contribute through his taxes to the income of an inefficient professional?

Government is duty-bound to search for other, more imaginative ways of funding litigation which will deliver justice to everyone. Today you can only litigate if you are very rich or very poor. The proposals which I shall be announcing today will modernise our system of civil justice and set out new ways of funding cases brought to it.

Lord Irvine of Lairg is the Lord Chancellor. He will be addressing the Law Society conference in Cardiff today.

NATURE NOTES



Cook Robin
(Sanctimonious foreignsecretarius)
More comfortable at home in its natural habitat, it will noticeably wilt when the heat is on. Stoppy little breeder in territorial disputes. Polygamous.

Fig.1 Putting its foot in it

A collection of Nature Notes is now available in book form. To order a signed copy, see Weekend Page 11

The politics of the family

John Lloyd asks: in a secular age, how can the State promote domestic stability?

Family anguish dominated the front pages of tabloid and broadsheet alike on Wednesday. Impatient of the new national spirit of sobriety which was supposed to have banished prurience since the death of Diana, the press found sufficient public interest in three tales of private misfortune. It reported in as much detail as possible the alleged rumour of an affair between the Tory MP for Beckenham and an 18-year-old nightclub hostess; on the announcement by the England football team coach that he had left his wife; and on the possible penile deformities of the US President.

We have one public family triumph this year, which in other times we would have been enjoined to celebrate but which is now reduced to a rather embarrassed and modest formality. The British Royal Family has 50 years of marriage behind it since those black-and-white, respectfully distant photographs were taken of a slim, handsome naval officer standing beside a pretty, nervously composed young woman in a white lace dress with a vast train. When they married in 1947, 28 per cent of marriages survived to the golden anniversary; most of those which did not were prevented from doing so by death, with only 10 per cent ending through divorce. Now, death edges ahead of divorce only slightly; it accounts for 48 per cent, with divorce hard behind at 41 per cent.

Elizabeth and Philip are part of an elite in more ways than one; part of the "11 per cent club" of husbands and wives who have survived both life and discord. But they have stayed together to see the melancholy and very public failures of their children's marriages. The Windsors have long since lost their moral pre-eminence. Conservative MPs are bywords for banking. President Clinton came into office as a sinner repentant, having served time on the studio couch of repentance with his wife.

And now Glenn Hoddle? A marriage and a family so strong as to appear on a Shredded Wheat commercial: the role model for the role models who are the England team. The tectonic plates of media moralism moved when Mr Hoddle went to live with his spiritual adviser.

This flood of breakdowns and alleged infidelities, past and present, has functioned as a malign comment-

tary on the casual, do-your-own-thing Conservatism which William Hague has sought to stamp on his leadership of the Tory party. These essays in tolerance were a lurch too far for two of his most distinguished supporters, who publicly dissented this week. On Tuesday, on this page, Sir Malcolm Rifkind put the case that "there is such a thing as society [which]... is entitled to declare those values it wishes to encourage and to give preference to marriage and to heterosexual sexuality as the most suitable basis for social stability and the upbringing of future generations."

In remarks in this week's *Jewish Chronicle*, Lord Jakobovits, the former Chief Rabbi and Margaret Thatcher's favourite cleric, amplified a sermon he had given at the weekend by saying that "Labour has an attitude of coming to terms with the immorality of the day, and now the Tories do so as well."

Both Rifkind and Jakobovits are Jewish voices; the latter asserted that "As Jews, the original custodians of biblical morality, we ought to be particularly concerned with enhancing moral standards." Divorce is not unknown among Jews—as obituaries on the much-married Harold Robbins this past week have reminded us—but it is probably still true that the attachment to religion, ethnicity and a family life punctuated by religious ceremony in which the father's role as patriarch is underpinned provides a greater shield against the temptations to break away than any in the Gentile, Christian or ex-Christian world.

One does not need the filter through which Lord Jakobovits views the world to see that something which he calls "immorality" is the media currency of our times. This is the age in which we have boldly advanced into the bedrooms of the night. As the Editor of the *Sunday Mirror* made clear when describing her operation to reveal Piers Merchant's alleged affair, it is an age in which the most professionally executed exercises in popular journalism are those whose aim is to prove that men and women in public life sleep, from time to time, with people other than their partners in marriage.

But the intrusion into the bedroom of the telescopic lens is the result, not the cause, of the fertile condition in which the family lives. The late Christopher Lasch, the American social critic, was among those who saw the culture of modern capitalism as inimical to family cohesion, lamenting as he did: "The invasion of the family by the marketplace and the street, the crumbling of walls that once provided a protected space in which to raise children, and the perversion of the most intimate relationships by the calculating, manipulative spirit that has long been ascendant in our business life."

Yet what is the road back to the family? Not through faith, to be sure. The strongest outpouring of faith this country has seen—we still do not understand it—is has been the grief-worship accorded to Diana. The Archbishop of Canterbury told his clergy recently that they should see in this a genuine religious impulse. Yet Diana was the patron saint of the adulterous, the divorced and the gay. If this is faith, then it is one which celebrates the death of any concept of immorality, replacing it with an inclusive universe of belief that we are all as good as we can be and that religion cannot preserve the concepts of sin or Hell.

New Labour commands the ground here (William Hague is trying to emulate it, but cannot yet pull it off). The Prime Minister is a model of religion and marriage, but neither his faith nor his fidelity causes him to question others' right to have what sexual arrangements and preferences they wish. His faith has nothing in common with that of Lord Jakobovits: it is private, non-judgmental, with no consequences for his colleagues or his electorate. He can thus be both pious and liberal: indeed, in the planned rights to be extended to homosexuals, this is already one of the most liberal Governments since the war—not an achievement which Alastair Campbell will trumpet, but nonetheless real for blushing unseen.

Extending rights is relatively easy; curbing licence is the very devil. New Labour is keen on responsibilities of parents to children, particularly of fathers to the children they begot and whose mothers they leave. At this stage, the Government is still groping after mechanisms by which marriage, or at least responsible parenthood, can be supported; which mix of benefits and tax will influence behaviour in a responsible direction; how far jobs, even low-paid jobs, can provide the basic infrastructure for family and community life.

The rearing of children has to be supported—even, in some sectors, reinvented. It must be supported through the provision of a minimally decent income; through an expansion of nurseries which would allow women to work; through the spreading of an educational culture to which more would feel themselves entitled and attracted; and through the provision of work. It must be reinvented because more-or-less stable families, even if they continue to be the largest element in the rearing of children, will not again monopolise the scene. The rearing of children has also to be conducted by mothers and fathers who no longer live with each other, and by men and women who volunteer for parenthood through fostering. Only the State can attempt to ensure minimal standards in this area.

Increasingly, as Blair and Hague both realise, it is unwise to privilege the nuclear family over the unwed or the separated, the heterosexual over the homosexual—not just because it is discriminatory, but because all share in child-rearing. Increasingly, policy has little choice but to seek ways in which care can be underpinned or even enforced; seeking clumsily to follow the twists and turns of human relationships in the global marketplace, where tradition is no longer a support.

When we cease to believe that marriages are made in Heaven—pace Lord Jakobovits and the minority who do—we are in the terrain of society and the state of personal choice constrained by social morality mediated by governments. What else is there?

John Lloyd is associate editor of the *New Statesman*. Simon Jenkins is away.

Passage to the India in us all

Simon Barnes on Albion's love affair with a subcontinent

It was once said, in a book rather confusingly called *The Tao of Cricket*, that cricket is an Indian game that happened to have been invented in England. After the victory of Arundhati Roy in the Booker Prize, it seems clear that English literature is an Indian art-form that happened to have been invented in England.

After the works of Salman Rushdie and Vikram Seth, Ms Roy's novel, *The God of Small Things*, seems destined to become another Anglo-Indian literary chart-topper. It is another example of the almost mystical link between this country and the sub-continent. It is a kind of passion. The passionate relationship has been going on for centuries but has never settled to the calm, comfortable sobriety of married life. In its crazed mood swings, its sudden shifts of piercing intuition, its majestic capacity for misunderstanding, the relationship seems caught forever in the first fortnight of an apocalyptic love affair, one that will last an eternity. If it doesn't end at breakfast tomorrow.

Empire was not the cause of this mystical relationship, although perhaps it was the prime symptom. Were all the trappings of Empire acquired merely to provide a setting for India? After all, every Victorian penny bore the words "Ind Imp" Empress of India. The rest of the Empire could go hang.

But like all love affairs, doubt and self-doubt have alternated with bouts of glorious certainty. During the Queen's troubled tour of India, each country has been vying for the right to perform the greater *faux pas*. Total incomprehension can be achieved with stunning effortlessness. The English traveller in India talks with the well-educated Indian. We speak of literature and cricket; what else? A cigarette, perhaps? The Indian produces a naff packet of would-be Western fags. The Englishman pulls out his beedies—a beedie being a tobacco leaf rolled into a slim cone and neatly tied with a cotton thread. The Indian refuses with a shudder: why, one's housewife would turn his nose up at such a thing. But the Englishman also refuses: he would not dream of being seen with the pretentious city-slicker cigarette. Both choices, both refusals show a profound romanticism about the other's culture, and an equally profound misunderstanding of it.

Thus Roy's book, adored over here, and part of the continuing love affair with the Indian novel, is inevitably the subject of an obscenity suit in India. The fact that this concerns a passage about caste taboo will only inflame the passions higher: Indian hostility, English fascination.

Back to cricket, and the eternal English belief that of all the world's cricket nations, India most truly understands the ancient values: the slow pace and immense subtlety of Test match cricket. Not so: in India, one-day cricket rules: the love of festival has conquered all.

Each culture seeks in the other what it most greatly lacks. The Briton, yearning as ever to stain the face with coffee grounds and mingle in the bazaar, seeks spiritual certainty. In the 1960s, the age of gurus, an Indian writer commented: "English hippies thought we were all cosmic. But we knew we were all provincial."

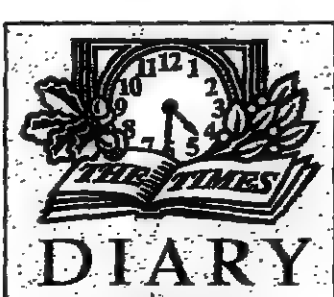
Indians seek another certainty, one that is only partly material. Prosperity brings a different kind of self-worth; and with it a spiritual poverty. England touched something of what it most greatly envies in Indian culture with Princess Diana's funeral, and the shoreless seas of flowers. In grief, London transformed itself into a Hindu temple.

Kept waiting

THE chairman of the Royal Opera House, Peter Gummer (already Lord Chaddington to his staff, a year after he was ennobled) has become a source of unhappiness at London's smartest club, White's. His proposers are accused of breaching protocol by trying to bypass the waiting list. Newly proposed members usually have to wait for eight years, such is the cachet of the St James's hangout. An exception is made only if 40 other members—who include the Dukes of Devonshire and Marlborough and the Earl of Cadogan—sign the book, allowing fast-track entry. Sadly, Gummer, brother of the former Tory chairman John and head of Shandwick, the PR outfit, had no such support and two years after being proposed, his name still languishes on the waiting list.

His cause has not been helped by Lord Rotherwick and the marabout-St James's Street, Jeremy Sacher. Having nominated him, they wrote to fellow members urging them to sign the book. "We sent it to people who we thought

were friends of Peter but had failed to sign his form," says Sacher. The round-robin—sent to members at home—argued, rightly I feel, that Gummer would make an affable addition. They omitted mention of his other clubs: the silly Hurlingham and the working-man's hangout, the Garrick. "He is too busy to hang around on waiting lists," says Sacher. "We just wanted to hurry him in." This was not one of their brighter ideas. Members, who would faint at a fish-knife, are cross. "It's monstrous," splutters one. "We joined to avoid harassment and now we're getting it from our own club table."



Free speech

IT was a blistering attack. Labour's purge of the Whitehall information service prompted Mo Mowlam's now former colleague, Andy Wood, to compare the Government's control of information to that of the Nazis. To the amusement of guests at his leaving bash at Stormont, the former head of Information at the Northern Ireland Office—eased out because of "a lack of personal chemistry" with Ms Mowlam—savaged "the whizz-kids at Millbank". Adapting the words of

Martin Niemöller, the German theologian who spent eight years in concentration camps, Wood said: "When they came for the press officers, I did not speak up because I was not a press officer."

His words will add to the pressure on ministers accused of issuing party propaganda under the guise of information. He said he felt like "the Knightsbridge girl at an orgy. After two months on gardening leave—and I am to gardening what Joseph Stalin was to open government—I know just how sore she must have felt." He said the Millbank spin-doctors had been "naively credited" with Labour's election victory.

"They may have played a mean game of fantasy football in the artificial atmosphere of an election, but they have yet to win a real

league worth a toss," he said, before reassuring friends: "You can play them off the pitch."

Santa's dear

WHEN did the Prince of Wales last attend a Jewish wedding? I ask as his skiing companion Miss Santa Palmer-Tomkinson is to marry Simon Sebag-Montefiore, of the successful Jewish clan. So keen is she to wed "Sebag" that she has been taking instruction in the Jewish faith, casting aside the comforts of her local church in Hampshire for the glimmer of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St John's Wood. "My parents are very supportive," insists Santa. "I am taking classes in Jewish history and Hebrew." Hard going for an "it" girl.

HOW politics has changed. In the new West End play *A Letter of Resignation*, the Harold Macmillan character learns of a colleague's holiday in Italy. "Never understood the point of Italy. What's wrong with Perthshire?"

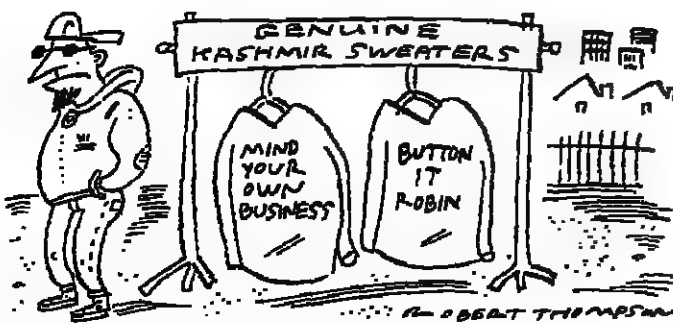
NEW TIMES HELL'S ANGELS believe they are being exploited commercially, so the alt-rock band have copyrighted their name and are lobbying the DTI to ensure that proceeds from all future Hell's Angels shirts, etc, go to their way.



St Andrews poses: Alia Forte and actor Chris O'Donnell

PARTY TIME In the wild St Andrews wind, golfers' curses carry far—and this week the cries had a Gallic tilt. At the Alfred Dunhill pro-am tournament on the fabled Old Course, I joined a mixed bag of pitchers including Colin Montgomerie. Michel Platini, once a sublime footballer, played with his confrère Jacques Lafitte and a scowling Guy Drut. A champion hurdler, Drut was French Sports Minister until he met the fate that Tony Banks must fear. His swipes were punctuated with cries of "merde". Alia Forte was much taken by Chris O'Donnell, who played Robin in the film *Barman*. "I must get a photo with him," she gushed. "Coming Rocco?" "You go on ahead," he replied, wisely preferring to dwell on his approach shots.

JASPER GERARD





CLARITY AT LAST

A welcome end to uncertainty on EMU

Government is about hard choices, as Tony Blair recently reminded his party. And the biggest choice of all was whether to join the European single currency. Mr Blair and his Chancellor, Gordon Brown, have finally reached their decision. They will not join in 1999 nor, more important, will they enter in the lifetime of this Parliament.

This is the best decision that the two men could have taken; but it could not have been easy. When pressed to make the same pledge before the general election, they held back for fear that it would damage their pro-European credentials. Now, at last, they have come to understand that it is perfectly logical to be at the same time pro-European and sceptical of EMU.

There are many people who voted Labour on May 1 and have wished the Government well who until now have had their enthusiasm tempered by one substantial reservation: would this administration hurtle into what could be the biggest political and economic mistake for decades? Leaks to newspapers suggested that Mr Brown favoured early entry, prompting suspicions that these leaks were an attempt to soften up the country for a formal announcement.

That this was exactly the opposite of his intention comes as a powerful relief. The willingness of Mr Blair and Mr Brown to curb their natural enthusiasm for EMU in the face of countervailing economic and political logic shows a maturity and a flexibility that bode well for the future governance of the country.

The ending of uncertainty is essential. Not only voters, but businesses too, want clarity. Had the Chancellor decided on any other formulation, such as an intention to join "when the time is right", he would have been buffeted from week to week by the markets, by his European partners and by other politicians, demanding that he define exactly what his criteria were and pronounce regularly upon how close they were to being met. Far more sensible is to confirm that

Britain will watch the project with interest and allow several years to elapse before taking another decision. It would make no sense to exercise the opt-out for the first time, only to join soon after. The success or failure of EMU, and its implications for a Britain outside it, will not become apparent until the system has been running for some years. The Government's forthcoming statement will allow businesses to plan and voters to relax at least until the next election.

A firm decision need not even reduce Britain's influence in Europe, the argument always used against such a commitment. Other EU states never believed that Britain would join EMU in the first wave, nor did they even have high hopes that it would be in by the time that the euro's notes and coins were issued in 2002. They want Britain to be constructive towards EMU and not try to sabotage the project. They would ideally like Britain to join; but they are aware of the dangers of tying in a country whose economy is near the opposite end of the business cycle to their own.

Past decisions on Europe have too often been influenced by the effect that they would have on the governing party. Margaret Thatcher was forced to put sterling into the exchange-rate mechanism by her Chancellor, John Major, and Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, having previously been blackmailed into setting conditions for entry by another Chancellor and Foreign Secretary, Nigel Lawson and Geoffrey Howe. As Prime Minister, the same Mr Major later wanted to rule out joining EMU for a Parliament, but could not do so for fear of losing his own Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke.

The Labour Party, although it contains different views on Europe, is not riven by them. Given the scale of their majority, the Prime Minister and his Chancellor are free to take decisions that they believe to be right for the nation than was the last government. The two men deserve congratulation for making the right choice.

OIL AND TROUBLED WATERS

Prosperity and peace in the South Atlantic

With studied impartiality, President Clinton said in Buenos Aires yesterday that Britain and Argentina — two nations which showed "great responsibility" in international matters — should solve their differences through negotiations. He was referring, of course, to the Falkland Islands, though he did not name them. And although he insisted the issue should be settled by negotiation, not war, neither his hosts nor Britain has taken offence — despite wry smiles in Whitehall at the parallels with comments about neighbourly relations made during another, less happily reported, state visit.

In both London and Port Stanley, President Clinton's words have been met with equanimity. They are seen as the inevitable minimum he was bound to say. It has long been made clear to Washington that mediation on the sovereignty of the Falklands is out of the question unless both sides agree. And Labour has renewed a promise to the islanders that it will not enter talks without their consent. What is new, and more significant, is that President Menem appears to have changed tack. In the past, he has lost no opportunity to try to internationalise the dispute. This time, he was content with ritual expressions of concern.

Senior Menem's country now enjoys excellent relations with Britain: trade is booming, investment is high, senior political and business delegations exchange regular visits. Guido di Tella, the Argentine Foreign Minister, is a frequent visitor to London and is scheduled to hold his second meeting with Robin Cook next month. Britain still maintains a formidable garrison on the Falklands. But there is a palpable relaxation

of tension. The promise of oil in the stormy seas, bringing huge potential revenues to both Argentina and the Falklands, has been a spur to maturity. The Falkland Islands Government sends delegates to meetings in London and Buenos Aires to discuss the future exploitation of the seas between the islands and the mainland. These talks have been sober and businesslike.

No oil has yet been found in the South Atlantic, and the Falklands Government has repeatedly cautioned against exaggerated optimism. The first drilling rigs will not be in place before April; it will be another few months before the test wells yield any evidence. But already Argentina, Britain and the Falklands are looking at the consequences of a bonanza. It would change for ever not only the way of life on the sparse and windswept islands, but the whole tempo of development in the South Atlantic.

Senior Menem knows that if his country is to reap the rewards of the fast-developing Mercosur common market in South America, attract outside investment and keep on track the economic and democratic changes that have been the welcome hallmark of his administration, he needs to lay aside for ever the threat of renewed hostilities over the Falkland Islands. For this, he does not need America. He needs to continue a policy of reconciliation and outreach to the islands, best demonstrated not in rhetoric about sovereignty but in pragmatic, day-to-day talks about sharing future prosperity. The islanders, for their part, have got over their fears that Labour would be soft on their defence. They too should be reassured by the moderate tones of Argentina's leaders.

NOBLESSE CAN OBLIGE

Modernisation must respect county and custom

The office of lord lieutenant is under predictable fire from Labour modernisers. Although it may seem to have a Gilbertian ring when viewed from Millbank Tower, it is more than just another handle for the rural rich: it is an under-appreciated office whose reform requires care.

As our Whitehall Editor reports, Tony Blair is anxious to broaden the base from which the Queen's representative in the counties is drawn. The increasing pressure for informality in public office provides a proper justification for reviewing how these Crown appointees are chosen and the manner in which they perform their duties. It is important, however, that necessary dignity is not compromised by the claims of modernity and that urban mores do not dictate county practice.

Mr Blair is, apparently, exercised by the narrow social base from which lord lieutenants are drawn and anxious to play down some of the protocol attendant on the office. It is certainly true that many of those who currently enjoy the honour are representatives of the old aristocracy or gentry. At first glance their predominance might appear uncomfortably feudal, comforting to those romantics who yearn for a countryside dominated by Sir Roger de Coverley but out of tune with the spirit of a democratic age.

It is important, however, to recognise the role that lord lieutenants must play. They must be at ease with ceremony, relaxed with a public role, capable of entertaining and

inclined to see the office as a duty to be borne rather than a bauble to be cherished. One need not be a creaking reactionary to recognise that those who, for good or ill, already enjoy an established and accepted social status in their county are more likely to approach the office in a spirit of obligation rather than self-advancement.

There is, certainly, room for greater diversity in the range of individuals chosen to become lord lieutenants but it is vital also to respect the diversity of social perspectives within Britain about who might be appropriate. Very different figures will appropriately reflect the pattern of life in Essex and Gloucestershire. Choosing the Queen's representative in Cornwall is a task as delicate and as distinct from electing a health board chairman as would be choosing the Master of Balliol.

Just as the pool from which lord lieutenants are selected could, sensitively, be broadened, so, with sensitivity, the protocol around their office could be relaxed. The tone of British life has changed so rapidly recently that the dignity of office can be undermined by a rigid adherence to unchanging procedure. For many, nevertheless, there are moments in the life of a community that can be enhanced by a measure of custom and ceremony which dignifies the recognition of voluntary effort. Mr Blair should respect the poetry of tradition as he attempts to create the very model of a modern lord lieutenant.

Threat to Britain's brewing heritage

From the Chairman of the Independent Family Brewers of Britain

Sir, Britain's unique pub and brewery heritage has been under increasing threat from imports of cheap beer from the Continent. These have now reached the immense total of 1.2 million plus per day — or 4.9 per cent of all beer consumed in the UK.

At the start of the century there were 6,500 brewers in the UK; by 1995 that figure was reduced to 64. The Independent Family Brewers of Britain represents the 36 family-run and controlled brewers who can truly be said to be the guardians of the UK's real ale traditions and own many of the smaller, rural and village pubs. They are facing an increasing struggle to maintain their market against the flood of European imports, many of which are sold on illegally.

When the UK signed up to the Treaty of Rome it agreed to work towards harmonising duty levels and to a "system ensuring that competition in the internal market is not distorted". This the UK has failed to do. To make matters worse, the Chancellor in the July Budget proposed raising taxes on beer; this will simply aggravate the unequal trading situation we are already facing, with imports from France growing at 30 per cent per year.

Research by Oxford Economic Forecasting into the effect on UK jobs if excise duty were reduced by 20 per cent — research which was run through the Treasury's own computer model — shows that over three years 60,000 jobs would be created and that the public sector borrowing rate would be reduced. Surely this would be better for Britain than creating French jobs and contributing to the French exchequer?

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY FULLER,
Chairman, Independent Family Brewers of Britain,
c/o Fuller, Smith & Turner plc,
Griffin Brewery,
Chiswick Lane South, W4,
October 13.

Burrell's gift

From Sir Nicholas Goodison, Chairman of The National Art Collections Fund

Sir, I am sorry that you think the overturning of the condition attaching to Sir William Burrell's munificent gift of his works of art to Glasgow both readily acceptable and desirable (leading article, "Artistic licence", October 15).

It is neither. As I explained when I gave evidence to the parliamentary commissioners last week, Glasgow willingly accepted the gift and undertook to uphold the condition not to lend works of art abroad. It is not right to assume that Sir William would have changed his mind today. We cannot tell. His wish was unambiguous, and he placed his trust in the City of Glasgow. The city now wants to break his trust.

If Glasgow is allowed to do this, other donors will think twice before making conditional gifts or bequests to Glasgow and probably to any local authority or government-controlled institution. That is potentially very serious.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS GOODISON,
Chairman,
The National Art Collections Fund,
Mileage House,
7 Cromwell Place, SW7,
October 16.

Tory reform

From Ms Elizabeth Nutman

Sir, It may have given the rank-and-file activists at the Conservative Party conference great relief to vent their anger on wayward Conservative MPs (report, October 9).

Personally, I believe it would have been more honest if the rank and file had accepted responsibility for not voicing misgivings to visiting ministers over the years. Too often, party activists made a practice of sycophantic flatteries in the presence of "the great", ensuring they remained convinced that all was well in the best of all possible worlds, instead of getting to grips with the weeds flourishing about them.

One honourable and notable exception in our constituency got no thanks for plain speaking, but was accused of disloyalty to the party. A more truly loyal Conservative it would have been hard to find.

Yours sincerely,
ELIZABETH NUTMAN,
Highways, Highfield Hill,
Lydney, Gloucestershire.

From Mr Chris Powlson

Sir, During the run-up to the Conservative Party conference, I decided to respond to their calls for new young members to join local Conservative associations (letters, October 13). I made initial contact with my local association on October 3 and left my details and the reason for my call on their answering machine.

A week later I had not received a reply and decided to try again. Once more I was greeted by the answering machine, and repeated my interest in joining their association. Almost another week has now passed

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Protocol and pitfalls on a royal visit

From Canon Vinay Samuel

Sir, As an Indian who has lived in Britain for over eight years, I have been distressed at the rift in the relationships evidenced by the Queen's current visit.

India's people are hospitable and generous to visitors, whatever the situation. I deeply regret the response of the "chattering classes" of India who seem unable to represent this generosity of spirit adequately.

The last 50 years have brought many good things in Indo-British relationships: a number of Britain's top businessmen are from India, and British friends continue to make their own contribution to India. It is unfortunate of course when guests refer to quarrels between neighbours, or suggest that some of the damage they did in the past was not as bad as made out. But the rift is not the stuff of daily life in India, which this visit should have focused on.

Yours sincerely,
VINAY K. SAMUEL,
78 Chervell Drive,
Heathrow, Oxford,
October 17.

From Mr Christopher Hurst

Sir, Who can have advised the Queen that to describe the Amritsar massacre as "a distressing example" of "difficult episodes in our past" would in any way rise to the needs of the occasion?

How could such weasel words do anything other than disappoint (not to say distress) her hearers? A dignified silence would have been better.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER HURST,
Hurst & Co (Publishers) Ltd,
38 King Street, Covent Garden, WC2,
October 16.

From Mr Robert Findlay

Sir, Further to Mr I. M. Seben's letter today in support of General Dyer's action in 1919 at Amritsar, I have the General's biography by Ian Colvin (Blackwood, 1993). Which not only recounts the support for him from the military and civil authorities in Simla and London, but tells how the people of Amritsar swarmed round Circuit House in a vast crowd to thank Dyer for saving their womenfolk and goods

from mob plunder and restoring the city to normal business. The Sikhs went further and initiated him as a Sikh in the Golden Temple, in token of gratitude and confidence. The reaction of those on the spot at the time offers convincing evidence how far astray popular hearsay has gone since then.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT FINDLAY,
Knockour,
Alexandria, Dunbartonshire,
October 16.

From Mr Charles Wheeler

Sir, Mr Robin Cook is not the first Foreign Secretary to have underestimated the speed of communications in the sub-continent, as well as the sometimes excessive sensitivity of Indian officials (letters, October 16).

After her tour in 1961 of India and Pakistan, the Queen went on to Nepal, where King Mahendra, two months earlier, had dismissed his country's first elected Government, locked up Prime Minister B. P. Koirala and his Cabinet, outlawed political parties and imposed royal rule.

Her Majesty's speech in Kathmandu — composed by British officials and commending the King's administration in language similar to her virtual endorsement of General Ayub's military Government in Pakistan a few days before — caused considerable irritation in New Delhi, where Mr Koirala and his Congress Party were seen as a force for stability.

The Queen was accompanied to Nepal by that most experienced of diplomats, Sir Alec Douglas-Home.

Yours sincerely,
CHARLES WHEELER,
As from: 10a Portland Road, W11,
October 16.

From Mr Ganesh Lall

Sir, There is another very ancient Indian saying (leading article, "A guest in India", October 16): "Treat your guest as a god."

Hospitality and good manners transcend protocol. This incident has besmirched the good name of India.

I am, yours respectfully,
GANESH LALL,
7 Burrow Walk, SE21,
October 16.

Pages of history

From Mr W. C. F. Butler

Sir, On April 15 you published my letter on the serious and extensive deterioration of the irreplaceable historical stock of the British Library Newspaper Library at Colindale (also letters, April 21). I urged that a substantial lottery grant be awarded to microfilm these papers before they crumble to dust. Alan Hamilton's report (April 21) confirmed the extent of the problem and the value of the resource.

I am sure, therefore, that you and your readers will share my pleasure that the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded a grant of £27,750 to the library for a three-month feasibility study. This will develop plans for a co-ordinated programme of microfilming UK local newspapers to ensure their long-term accessibility both locally and in national archive collections.

This is an encouraging start and I am sure all concerned will be grateful to The Times for its part in bringing the matter to public attention.

Yours faithfully,
W. C. F. BUTLER,
20 Cranborne Road,
Hatfield, Hertfordshire,
October 16.

three who would then be put to the whole party.

John Townend, a member of the executive, states: "If the activists had their way Ted Heath would never have been replaced." As an activist at the time I well recall the disillusion with Ted Heath for the U-turns on Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, Rolls-Royce and the shambles of the three-day week, followed by capitulation to the miners.

William Hague should put the question of one member, one vote to the whole party for a decision. If the executive of the 1922 Committee are so confident of the strength of their case they will not be afraid of the answer.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN E. STRAFFORD,
Perama, Fulmer Road,
Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire,
October 13.

From Mr Simon Brandenburger

Sir, Sir Malcolm Rifkind writes about "family values" under the headline "Don't be too vague, Mr Hague" (October 14). He reminds us of the suburban fundamentalism which has dominated Conservative thinking for almost two decades, replacing the far more sophisticated liberalism of post-war Conservatism.

Mr Hague, for all his faults, has recognised the inherent tension between the extreme economic liberalism unleashed by Mrs Thatcher and the accompanying social illiberalism. He is now trying to rectify this. Sir Malcolm's rigorous legal mind has somehow failed to detect this flaw in Conservative thinking.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON BRANDENBURGER,
17 Anselm Road, SW6,
October 14.

To begin at the beginning...

From Dr R. A. Keable-Elliott

Sir, There will, I am sure, be endless debate as to what should or should not be included in a list of best opening lines (report and leading article, October 13), but I will hazard a guess that Charles Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities*, with "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" and "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to, than I have ever known", will be the only author in most people's top 40 choices to have both the opening lines and the closing lines taken from the same book.

Yours faithfully,
TONY KEABLE-ELLIOTT,
Peels, Ibsome,
High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire,
October 13.

From Mr John Mendes

Sir, "If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it." (*The Catcher in the Rye*, J. D. Salinger).

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MENDES,
1 Lower Street, Cavendish, Suffolk.

From Mr P. B. Gatch

Sir, Among the famous first lines must surely be included those of Peter Fleming in his *Brazilian Adventure* (1933): "I began with an advertisement in the Agency Column of *The Times*."

Yours truly,
PAUL GATCH,
15a Copse Hill, SW20.

From Mr A. J. Ashley

Sir, "It was love at first sight. The first time Yossarian saw the chaplain he fell madly in love with him."

How could the opening lines of Joseph Heller's *Catch 22* be omitted?

Yours faithfully,
ALAN ASHLEY,
Alan Ashley & Co (solicitors),
Broughton House,
6-8 Sackville Street, W1.

From the Headmaster of

Belhaven Hill School

Sir, Your leader writer has got it wrong: Michael Arlen's cigar-toting duchess said "Hello", not "Darn", and she is not in *The Green Hat*. That novel begins with the words: "It has occurred to the writer to call this unimportant history *The Green Hat* because a green hat was the first thing about her he saw."

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL OSBORNE,
Headmaster, Belhaven Hill School,
Dunbar, East Lothian.

From Ms Helen Grayson

Sir, Perhaps the lack of literary inventiveness in modern opening lines is due to the effect of the word-processor. When I ran the first sentence of *Moby Dick* through my spell-checker, it suggested changing this to "Call me Fishmeal".

Yours faithfully,
HELEN GRAYSON,
39 St James Terrace,
Horsforth, Leeds, West Yorkshire.
peaulfield@compulink.co.uk
October 13.

Learning by heart

From Mrs Valerie A. Willetts

Sir, In her article about National Poetry Day (October 8) Rachel Campbell-Johnston tells us that, as access to computer databases has increased, learning verse by heart has faded out of educational fashion.

No so. As a speech and drama teacher I encourage my pupils to learn poetry in this way, which they do for their own enjoyment as well as performing to an audience. Moreover, even the national curriculum recognises and openly encourages learning by heart.

In my experience the inexorable human desire to express emotion in verse is something the silicon chip can never replace.

Yours faithfully,
V. A. WILLETTS,
39a Inglewood Grove, Streety,
Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.

Excuses, excuses

From Sir Laurence Martin

Sir, Mrs Patricia Campbell's advice (letter, October 16) on how to explain away lost military equipment brought back happy memories of being a National Service officer in the RAF. In those days remarkable things could be done by tidying your inventory with something called a conversion voucher.

By sequentially exploiting overlaps and inconsistencies in categories of equipment you could go a long way. The record was reputedly held by a squadron leader said to have changed a "hangar, aircraft", supposedly in his care, to a "hangar, coat".

Yours faithfully,
LAURENCE MARTIN,
5 Fernville Road,
Newcastle upon Tyne,
October 16.

Weekend Money letters, page 61

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk



COURT CIRCULAR

TAJ COROMANDEL HOTEL, CHENNAI

October 17: The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh today attended a Luncheon given by the Governor of Kerala (Justice S.S. Kang) at the Taj Malabar Hotel, Kochi (Cochin).

Her Majesty this afternoon visited the Jewish Synagogue, Kochi, and met members of the Jewish community.

Her Majesty afterwards visited the International Commodity Exchange and viewed dealing and an exhibition of spices.

The Queen subsequently visited the Kochi Urban Poverty Reduction Project and viewed activities in the housing colony.

The Duke of Edinburgh this afternoon visited the Malayala Manorama Newspaper, Kochi.

His Royal Highness later visited the Don Bosco Centre for Street Children, Sneha Bhavan, Palluruthy, Kochi, and attended a Reception.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

His Excellency Mr. Gabor Szendvanyi was received in audience by The Duke of York and The Prince Edward, Counsellors of State acting on behalf of The Queen, and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Credence as Ambassador from the Republic of Hungary to the Court of St James's.

Mrs. Szendvanyi was also received by The Royal Highnesses.

Sir John Coles (Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) was present.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

October 17: The Princess Royal, Colonel-in-Chief, Royal Logistic Corps, today visited Vauxhall Barracks, Didcot, Oxfordshire.

Her Royal Highness, Colonel-in-Chief, The King's Royal Hussars, was represented by Major-General John Friedberger at the Memorial Service for Lieutenant-Colonel William Lighthow, which was held in the Royal Memorial Chapel, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, this morning.

KENSINGTON PALACE

October 17: The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester this morning arrived in the State of Bahrain and were received by Her Majesty's Ambassador (His Excellency Mr. Ian Lewis) and the Minister of Housing, Municipalities and Environment (Sheikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa).

His Royal Highness attended a Luncheon for British consultants and businessmen given by Her

Majesty's Ambassador at the British Embassy, Manama.

The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester this evening attended a Reception given by Her Majesty's Ambassador and Mrs. Lewis at the British Embassy.

YORK HOUSE

October 17: The Duchess of Kent, Patron, the Royal Ulster Constabulary Benevolent Fund, this afternoon attended a Luncheon at Victoria Barracks, Windsor, Berkshire, given by the 1st Battalion Royal Ulster Constabulary Widows and Mothers.

THATCHED HOUSE LODGE, RICHMOND PARK

October 17: Princess Alexandra, accompanied by the Rt Hon Sir Angus Ogilvy, this morning visited the Salt River Pines-Mariopa Indian Community in Scotland, Arizona, United States of America.

Her Royal Highness and Sir Angus Ogilvy this afternoon toured exhibitions in the Nelson Art Museum and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design at the Arizona State University and subsequently attended a Reception in the College Library.

Princess Alexandra and the Rt Hon Sir Angus Ogilvy this evening attended a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* given by the Phoenix Symphony and later attended a Reception in Symphony Hall, Phoenix.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

TODAY: Princess Margaret will attend a performance of Handel's *Messiah* at the Banqueting House, Whitehall, in aid of Help for Hospices and in thanksgiving for hospice care throughout the world at 7.15.

The Duchess of Kent, as Patron, BT Voices for Hospices 1997, will attend a performance of the *Messiah* at Southwark Cathedral at 7.30.

TOMORROW: The Duke of York, as Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps, will take the salute at the Sea Cadet Corps Trafalgar Parade, Trafalgar Square at noon.

Reception

National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies

The President of NADFA, Mr. Timothy Clifford, was the host at a reception held in the Guard Room at Lambeth Palace, by permission of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mrs. Carey, on Tuesday, October 14.

Service dinners

Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment

Rear-Admiral P.A.M. Thomas, Chief of Strategic Systems Executive, was the guest of honour and proposed the toast to the *Immortal Memory* at a Trafalgar Night dinner held last night at the Pentland Hotel, Thurso, and marked the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Vulcan establishment. Commander J.B.H. Binns presided.

41 Commando RM

Captain C.H.M. Sharpe presided at the annual dinner of the 41 Commando Officers' Dinner Club held last night at Royal Marines Poole. Lieutenant-Colonel R.J. Williams, RM, Commanding Officer, was the principal guest. The Earl of Lytton and Major-General P.L. Spurgeon were among others present.

Royal Pioneer Officers

Brigadier John Hickman presided at a Royal Pioneer Officers' Past and Present dinner held last night at St David's Barracks, Bicester. Major-General Martin White, Director-General Logistics Support (Army), was the guest of honour. General Sir John Stibbin, Vice-Patron of the Royal Pioneer Corps Association, was among those present.

HAC

The Honourable Artillery Company Association Football Club held their centenary dinner last night at Army House, Mr. Ian R. Humphreys, president, Mr. Richard Wilson, Oxford Centaurs, Colonel Sir Grenville Spratt, Major Paul C. Jones and Mr. John Spenser also spoke. General Sir Michael Wilkes, Lieutenant-Governor of Jersey and Colonel Commandant, HAC, was among those present.

RAF High Wycombe

Headquarters 38 Group held a ladies guest night dinner last night at RAF High Wycombe. Group Captain E.H. Anderson presided. Air Vice-Marshal D.A. Hurrell, Air Officer Commanding, HQ 38 Group, was the senior host.

Dinners

British Computer Society

Lord Butler of Dorchester, CH, was the guest of honour at a dinner of the British Computer Society, in association with the Company of Information Technologists, held last night at Guildhall and marked its 40th anniversary. Sir Brian Jenkins, president of the society, presided.

Royal Society of St George

Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo was the guest of honour at a dinner of the Royal Society of St George, the toast to the *Immortal Memory* at a Trafalgar Dinner held last night at HQS Wellington. Sir Colin Cole, President of the Royal Society of St George, presided. The Earl of Huntingdon, Mr. Michael Howard, QC, MP, Lady Cole, Sir Peter and Lady Imbert, and Mr. William Firth, chairman of the society, were among those present.



Guardman Gareth Thomas and his bride, Sarah Pudney, after their wedding yesterday

Weekend birthdays

Today

Sir Tim Bell, advertising executive, 67; Miss Adele Bliss, former chairwoman, British Tourist Authority, 53; Lord Clark of Kempson, 80; Professor Tim Clark, Dean of Pulmonary Medicine, National Heart and Lung Institute, 62; Lord Cook of Islandhead, 77; Lord E.H. Thomas, 51; Professor H.C.A. Hankins, former Principal and Vice-Chancellor, UMIST, 67; Mr. Jim Harding, chief executive, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 55; Mr. Edson James, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, 54; Lord Kimball, 69; Mr. Brian Murray, Building Societies Ombudsman for the Personal Investment Authority, 57; Sir James Nisrass, QC, former HM Procurator General and Treasury Solicitor, 65; Sir Joseph Pope, former Vice-Chancellor, Aston University, 83; Dr. Kate Prentis, Principal, Homerton College, Cambridge, 52; Lady Salmons, 67; Mr. Michael Smith, tennis player, 34; Lord Evans of Symes, first woman coroner, 85; the Earl of Tankerville, 41; Lord Taverne, QC, 59; Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Terry, 71; Mr. Pierre Trudeau, CH, former Prime Minister of Canada, 78; Vice-Admiral Sir James Willis, 74.

Tomorrow

Sir Leslie Boreham, former High Court judge, 79; Professor Sir Robert Boyd, FRS, physicist and astronomer, 75; Dr. David Clark, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 58; Sir John Cullen, former chairman, Health and Safety Commission, 71; Mr. Phil Davies, rugby player, 34; Lord Evans of Symes, 85; the Earl of Tankerville, 41; Lord Taverne, QC, 59; Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Terry, 71; Mr. Pierre Trudeau, CH, former Prime Minister of Canada, 78; Vice-Admiral Sir James Willis, 74.

Curriers' Company

The following have been elected officers of the Curriers' Company for the ensuing year: Master, Mr. C.S. Heaps; Upper Warden, Mr. D.H. Perwer; Lower Warden, Mr. C.W. Rone; Junior Warden, Mr. J.R. Bagshaw.

Today

Sir S.I. James, former senior partner, Simmons & Simmons, 67; Sir Robert Jennings, QC, former President, International Court of Justice, 84; Mr. John Le Carré, writer, 66; Mr. Graham Lock, former chief executive, Annual General Meeting Corporation, 66; Mr. Bill Morris, trade unionist, 59; Miss Mavis Nicholson, broadcaster, 67; Admiral of the Fleet Sir Michael Pollock, 81; Sir Allan Ramsay, former diplomat, 63; Air Chief Marshal Sir Anthony Skingley, 64; Sir Harold Walker, former diplomat, 65; Major Sir Patrick Wall, former MP, 81; Mr. Peter Whiston, architect, 85.

Lecture

The Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Trust announces that Dr. Manmohan Singh, former Finance Minister, the Government of India, will deliver the 20th Nehru Memorial Lecture on India and the World Economy on Monday, November 24, 1997, at 6.30pm in the Nash Room, the Institute of Directors, 116 Pall Mall, London. SW1Y 5ED. For free tickets, please apply by letter or fax to The Secretary, The Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Trust, 44 Queen's Road, Reading RG1 4BB. Fax no: 0118 9576634.

Tomorrow

BIRTHS: Maritza Filio, scholar, Filigine, Italy, 1433; Sir Thomas Browne, physician and writer, London, 1605; the day died this day, Norwich, 1632; Leigh Hunt, essayist, biographer, journalist, 1796; Charles Robert Leslie, painter, London, 1794; Adam Lindsay Gordon, poet, Royal Assizes, 1833; DEATHS: King John, reigned 1199-1216, Newark, Nottinghamshire, 1216; Jacobus Arminius, theologian, 1560; Jonathan Swift, satirist, Dublin, 1745; Henry Kirke White, poet, Cambridge, 1806; Francis Tuma, actor, Paris, 1826; Napoleon began his retreat from Moscow, 1812.

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Princess's pallbearer marries

GARETH THOMAS, one of the six Welsh Guardsmen who carried the coffin of Diana, Princess of Wales, at her funeral in Westminster Abbey, married Sarah Pudney at a register office in Horsham, Essex, yesterday.

Guardman Thomas, 24, whose father and grandfather were in the Welsh Guards, will be leaving the Army in December after his second tour in Northern Ireland. He and his wife will move near to his parents' home in Aberkenfig, near Bridgend. When they return from honeymoon, time in front of the video recorder will be in order, as Guardsman Thomas has yet to see the recording of the funeral.

Anniversaries

TODAY: BIRTHS: Luca Giordano, painter, Naples, 1632; Prince Eugene of Savoy, soldier and statesman, Paris, 1663; Richard (Ben) Nash, master of ceremonies at Bath, Swansea, 1674; Giovanni Antonio Canaletto, painter, Venice, 1697; Peg Woffington, actress, Dublin, 1720; Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, soldier and writer, author of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, Amiens, 1741; Thomas Phillips, portrait painter, Dudley, West Midlands, 1770; Thomas Love Peacock, writer, Weymouth, 1785.

DEATHS: Jacob Jordaeus, painter, Antwerp, 1676; Charles François Gounod, composer, St. Cloud, France, 1893; Alfred Binet, psychologist, Paris, 1911; Thomas Alva Edison, inventor, West Orange, New Jersey, 1931. The BBC was officially formed, 1922.

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Forthcoming marriages

Mr A.J. Bailey and Miss S.J. Gill

The engagement is announced between Adrian, son of Mr and Mrs John Bailey, of Knutsford, Cheshire, and Sarah, daughter of Dr Brian Gill and the late Mrs Susan Gill of Frant, East Sussex.

Mr W.G. Bull and Miss C.A. Hughes

The engagement is announced between Wilfred Bull and Carol Ann Hughes, both of Wiltshire, Cambridgeshire.

Mr N. Craig and Miss K.L. McAdam

The engagement is announced between Nicholas, elder son of Dr and Mrs John Craig, of Dunstable, Bedfordshire, and Karen Louise, elder daughter of Professor and Mrs Keith McAdam, of Redbourn, Hertfordshire.

Mr D.C. Curry and Miss N.M. Baigrie

The engagement is announced between David Curry, son of Mr and Mrs Roger Curry, of Harnham, Wiltshire, and Natasha Margaret, daughter of Mr and Mrs Stephen Baigrie, of Denbigh, North Wales.

Mr A.J. Danks and Miss R.L. Cheshire

The engagement is announced between Andrew, only son of Mr and Mrs R.A. Danks, of Lymington, Hampshire, and Emma, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Stephen Cheshire, of Denbigh, North Wales.

Mr S.J. Drowne and Miss C.E. Hardill

The engagement is announced between Stephen, only son of Mr and Mrs Michael Drowne, of Ashwater, Devon, and Clare, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Guy Hardill, of Cliphro, Suffolk.

Mr R.A.A. Eaglesome and Miss G. Gleason

The engagement is announced between Robert, son of Mr and Mrs Alex Eaglesome, of Oxford, and Geraldine, daughter of Mr Tom Gleason, of Wexley, London, and Mrs Paula Gleason, of Edgware, London.

Mr N.A. Flaxman and Miss M.C. Dwan

The engagement is announced between Andrew, only son of Mr and Mrs Michael Flaxman, of Clarendon, Surrey, and Clare, sixth daughter of Mr and Mrs John Dwan, of Duluth, Minnesota, USA.

Mr G. Hoare and Miss A. Brown

The engagement was announced on September 30, 1997, between Gregory Hoare and Alison Brown.

Service appointments

RAF

Mr Commodore

TM Gibson, MOD, 20.10.97; AC Lang, St. Albans, 24.10.97.

Wing Commander

DR Herriot, DIOT Cranwell, 10.10.97; DA Angus, MOD, 6.10.97; DA Brown, RAF Kinloss, 6.10.97; ET Elliott, HQPTC, 6.10.97; RP Radley, D Force Development, 6.10.97.

NW Gatmon, HQICL Brampston, 20.10.97; RJ Kralley, STOC Honington, 20.10.97.

Retirements

Air Commodore

TC Davies 21.10.97.

Legal appointments

Mr Andrew Edward Wilson Park QC, has been appointed as a Justice of the High Court, Chancery Division.

Mr Norman Bruce Cameron, QC, has been appointed a Circuit Judge to the Midlands and Oxford Circuit.

Deputy Lieutenant

Major Charles Jeffrey Winstanley has been appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London.

Marriage

Mr A.G.R. Windham and Miss A.M. Hoare

Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, was present at the marriage yesterday at St Luke's, Sydney Street, Chelsea, of Mr A.G.R. Windham, elder son of Mr and Mrs William Windham, of Glasbury-on-Wye, Powys, to Miss Anabella Hoare, daughter of Mr and Mrs Francis Hoare of Loughborough, Leicestershire. The Rev Christopher Kenill-Davies officiated and Mr Hughie Beattie gave an address.

The bride, who was given in marriage by her father, was attended by Ariane Gely, Rosie Priestley, Georgina Fennell, Lara Macpherson, Charlie Legge and Archie Phillips. The Earl of Strathmore and Kinross was best man.

A reception was held at St James's Palace and the honeymoon is being spent in East Africa.

Mr P.G. Jones and Miss A.J.C. Foley

The marriage took place on Saturday, September 27, 1997, in Great Bookham, Surrey, of Mr Philip Jones to Miss Anabella Foley.

Memorial service

Lieutenant-Colonel W.S.P. Lighthow

The Princess Royal was represented by Major-General John Friedberger at a memorial service for Lieutenant-Colonel W.S.P. Lighthow held yesterday in the Royal Memorial Chapel, Sandhurst. The Rev. Barry Paine, assistant chaplain, Royal Military Academy, officiated. Mr Richard Lighthow, son, read the lesson. Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Hodgson paid tribute, and the Rev John Stroyan gave an address.

Major Keith Brooks represented serving members of the Kings Troop Royal Horse Artillery and Major Patrick Beresford represented the Royal Hussars. Among others present were the chairman, chief executive and members of the council of the Pony Club, representatives from the British Horse Society and the British Horse Trials Association and many other family, friends and former colleagues.

Peter Banks

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Peter Banks, who died on Sunday, September 21, 1997, is to be held at St Michael's Cornhill, London, EC3, in conjunction with the Company of Water Conservators, CIWEM and ISTT, on Tuesday, November 11, 1997, at 6.00pm.



Geldof surrounded by the children for whom he founded Live Aid. Photograph: Frank Herrmann

ST BOB THE UNMOKKABLE

Is That It? by Bob Geldof (Penguin, £3.95)

"Ah, Mr Geldof," said the Prime Minister in gracious tones. "I think it's wonderful what you've been doing with the Band Aid record." Geldof's response was to the point. "Thank you Prime Minister, but I was reading in *The Times* the other day that you were planning to spend £10 million disposing of surplus EEC butter. Don't you think that's ridiculous?"

The gracious exchange became less gracious. "Mr Geldof," said Mrs Thatcher, "the starving Ethiopians, they can't eat butter." "They can eat butter oil," returned Bob.

"I was saying the unsayable!" he thinks afterwards, amazed at the simplicity of such a confrontation. An obstinate realist, Geldof discovered a way of getting things done: cut aside red tape and egoism, pursue a truth and gamble on it against a hundred bureaucratic obstacles. *Is That It?* is his autobiography, told with intelligence and wit, and without self-aggrandisement. "I'm not bloody St Teresa," he snaps as people begin to address him in tones of gloomy reverence, on the point of trying to kiss the hem of his jeans.

Geldof begins at the earliest memory. A Davy Crockett suit, a girl, and a kiss. Life is

ON THIS DAY

October 18, 1886

Even in his days as a pop star with the Boomtown Rats, Bob Geldof was never afraid of saying what he thought. It was a trait that was to stand him in good stead when he founded Live Aid.

fine until his mother dies and his father beats him. His school work deteriorates. It is still bad in his teens. In the holidays he helps at the Simon Community, a place for the homeless and drunk in Dublin. He feels ugly until the Rolling Stones arrive: scruffiness is suddenly de rigueur and Jagger's lips a gorgeous norm.

As Geldof has a similar mouth, he is in luck.

In Canada things begin to look up: Geldof becomes a music journalist, then back to Ireland he forms a band called the Night Life Thugs. Fortunately they changed the name to Boomtown Rats and the rest is more or less history. The moment he was famous — stands

of the future — he seized the opportunity to say what he thought as on *The Late Late Show* (the biggest television show in Ireland). Ireland "surprised in a sea of self-pity and hypocrisy," he declared.

Uproar is succeeded by greater uproar, and he is denounced in pulpits. "Let us pray for the soul of this poor, dermented boy."

Is That It? is a marvellous autobiography. Geldof writes about his childhood in finely sensitive detail, and gives the feeling of the era, the atmosphere of places. Towards the end the pace changes: it is impossible to put down, and to my surprise it becomes very moving — the visit to Ethiopia, the response that gathered momentum, and the battle with individuals and institutions Geldof fought for Live Aid.

Miraculously his tone is never sanctimonious. It is always too dry, too caustic. It is as if he has one eye cocked for an imaginary audience, waiting to deride an image of Geldof with laid-back, highly articulate, awkward "bugger," as he calls himself, pre-empting mockery with self-mockery.

It all began with a news item on the famine. An idea is sparked, and it is fascinating to see it grow, culminating in Live Aid, "that peerless day in July 1985." *Is That It?* (the question Bob is pondering now) is mandatory reading for cynics. — Kathy O'Shaughnessy

BMDs: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

BIRTHS

BAILEY - On the 11th of October 1997 to Jack and Sue, a daughter, Eliza Kathleen, a sister to Liam.

CARRUTHERS - On Tuesday 7th October to Kate (nee Webb) and Robert, a son, James Mackenzie Lee.

CLOWES - On 15th October to Claire (nee Taylor) and William, a son, Charles Henry Somerset.

DROCK - On 19th September, 1997 to Helen (nee Gough) and Timothy, a son, Jonathan Ashley, a brother for Jennifer and Nicholas.

DANVERS - On October 12th at The Portland Hospital to Patsy (nee James) and Andrew, a son, Thomas.

DICKSON - On 10th October to Lillian (nee Taylor) and Lillian, a daughter, Lillian Rose, a sister for Jennifer and Nicholas.

FABER - To Robert and Kim (Patsy), on 21st September at home, a daughter, Lillian Rose, a sister for Jennifer and Nicholas.

FOSTER - On 15th October to Alison (nee Taylor) and Charles, a son, Thomas Henry.

GALL - On October 13th 1997 to Elizabeth (nee Hillier) and Nicholas, a son, Mark Nicholas.

HONEY - On October 17th, at Addenbrooke's, Cambridge, to Emma, wife of Frederick John R. de Stoney, a daughter, Mary-Clare Margaret.

DEATHS

KILBRIDE - On the 3rd of October at 4.12pm in the Portland Hospital, South Africa to David (nee Jones) and Ian who was aged 72 years.

LANE - On 10th October at 12.00pm in the Portland Hospital, South Africa to David (nee Jones) and Ian who was aged 72 years.

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AWAY DAYS: THE TWICKENHAM EXPERIENCE



The stadium may be empty but tour guides are accomplished at keeping youngsters amused, and a run through the players' tunnel conjured up the magic of Twickenham for six-year-old Toby Symington.

SOCCER
FACT FILE

■ Tours of the stadium held Tuesday to Saturdays at 10.30am, 12 noon, 1.30pm and 3.00pm, and at 2pm and 2.30pm on Sundays, except two days before or after a match. Contact The Twickenham Experience on 0181-692 2040. It is best to ring and book, especially at weekends. The tour takes about an hour and a half. Allow the same for the museum.

■ The Museum of Rugby is open 10.30am-5.00pm Tuesday to Saturday (except match days, when it closes shortly before kick-off and reopens for an hour after the final whistle. Then it can be visited only by ticket holders). It is open 2-5pm on Sundays.

Combined charge for tour and museum: adults £4, children (under 16) £2.50, or £2.50 and £1.50 for museum only. Family ticket: £10 for two adults and three children. Under-16s are not admitted.

■ Twickenham railway station is about 10 minutes' walk from the stadium. There is ample free parking, except on match days. In the car park by entrance gate 11.

■ Snacks, meals and drinks (including alcohol) are served at the Invincibles Café. To book rugby-themed parties, call 0181-744 9595. There is a wide choice of places to eat in Twickenham itself. The most atmospheric rugby-themed pub is The White Swan, by the Thames.

■ The large TVI shop next door to Invincibles sells strips and souvenirs of national and club teams.

■ Another international stadium to visit is Murrayfield, in Edinburgh. Contact the Scottish Rugby Union on 0131-546 5000. Tours are at 10am, 11am, 1pm, 2pm and 3pm, every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, except Scottish public holidays and the week preceding international matches (this year November 22 and December 6). Charge: Adults £2, children under 18, £1. Booking is essential.

■ THE "WHERE DO I START?" SITE: <http://www.sky.co.uk/sports/manu/index.htm> is the Official Homepage of Manchester United — or go straight to David Beckham's site at <http://home3.wip.net/~w31477/>, which has been drooled over so far by more than 27,000 fans. <http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Field/2028/links.html> is the Red Devils' links page, sending you to dozens of MUFC websites from more than 40 countries. <http://www.lionsour.com/museum.htm> for a dull but informative page on the Twickenham Experience tour. Or you can try <http://snipe.ukc.ac.uk/law/spu/clubs.htm> where you will find a good list of English Rugby Links.

And why is that man crying?" asked my six-year-old son, admonishingly. But I knew the answer. Bankers about rugby since he was Toby's age, Fernando told me he played right-headed prop for a team in Buenos Aires as we waited for our "Twickenham Experience" tour. This was a pilgrimage to his spiritual home — the home of rugby, as he put it — and the main reason for his first visit to London.

His moment of truth came at the climax of the tour — a run through the players' tunnel on to the hallowed turf. There stood Fernando, in tones of barrel-chested Argentine leek, his glazed eyes gazing up between the upright posts, and tears coursing down his snubly cheeks.

"Because he can't quite believe he's here, Toby," I tried to explain. We had come to Twickenham for reasons rather shorter on raw emotion. Toby is just making his debut as a mini-rugby player in Bath, and I'm a dedicated fan. We would have a fun day out together. Male bonding between father and son, that sort of thing.

Our guide, John Hardy, a retired businessman, former club player and lifelong aficionado, was waiting at the main gates for our ten-strong group, which included a Japanese couple and a family of five from Dorset. He whisked us, by lift, high into the top of the

Tears for a field of dreams

The Twickenham Experience isn't just a great day out. It can even make real men cry, says Martin Symington

north stand, where we looked out across a rippling sea of 75,000 empty seats. "Just listen to the silence for a while, then imagine the roar as England scores against the All Blacks!" said Mr Hardy. He was accomplished at evoking the sense of stirring patriotism that has Twickenham crowds bawling out *God Save the Queen* and *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*.

Mr Hardy was also skilled at keeping the youngsters amused. For example, when we reached the royal box in the west stand, he invited an amused and delighted Toby to park his posterior on the very leather where Her Majesty does the same on her occasional visits. For the unworldly, he was able to call on a vast array of facts and statistics, both about the stadium and the history of the game. I was interested in the commentary box and how the television coverage operates, having watched and listened to Nigel Stanger-Smith, Bill McLaren and their studio guests over the years.

Next, we were swept through the swish President's Suite and fusty RFU Committee (aka Will Carling's notorious "old fart" Room). Then it was down to the medical suite and dope-testing centre and into the ultimate inner sanctum — the tradition and superstition-soaked England players' dressing room.

"The front row always use these three pegs," said Mr Hardy, his voice dropping in hushed reverence. We were equally awestruck when we were shown the giant, 60-year-old iron baths. He told us: "Twenty minutes before kick-off, everybody leaves the room except the players. The captain then addresses them."

The build-up for our fantasy run through the players' tunnel was now complete. Out we went into the roaring, capacity-crowded stadium for the uplifting national anthems and the blood and thunder of international confrontation. Poor old Fernando. It was all a bit too much for him.

Toby and I had lunch in the Invincibles Café (so called

after the unbeaten 1924 All Blacks side), where spinach quiche was on the menu. I know these are the caring Nineties, but doesn't the Real Man have any last bastion?

We rounded off the day in the Museum of Rugby, which is under the east stand. For me, this was the biggest surprise of the day. I had expected an explanation of rugby's historical roots, and perhaps some interesting bits of memorabilia such as the Calcutta Cup and Five Nations trophy.

to detain us for half an hour. Instead, we found a sophisticated, ultra-modern museum that kept us enthralled for three times as long.

High-tech visuals and acoustics brilliantly recreated the atmosphere of Twickenham on match days as we went through a muck-up turnstile into a cauldron of life-size model players in action, surrounded by singing, shouting, moving crowds projected

onto the walls. The "medical suite" and "dressing room" were even more authentic, with gory bits of blood-stained bandage, mud, boots and dirty kit on the floor, while the whiff of liniment hung in the air. Toby thought these were much more exciting than the actual rooms we had visited earlier.

He soon learned up with a couple of other young lads and, pitched into the scrum machine. Meanwhile, I had discovered the banks of interactive, touch-screen computers. You

can call up any team or era you like and watch choice pieces of action, complete with original commentary, played through headphones. "This is brilliant," said Toby, as soon as he had got the hang of this game. It was.

I had definitely earned my spurs as a dad and the two of us left, having had a great day out together.

I am not sure, though, whether we would have come all the way from South America for the experience.

ISLANDS ON THE EDGE



An eleven day exploration of some of the UK & Ireland's most remote islands aboard the 'Professor Mullanovskiy'

5th to 15th June 1998

Our eleven day expedition cruise aboard the ideally suited 'Professor Mullanovskiy' will take us from the delightful river port of Dartmouth to the Scottish Highlands, on an island odyssey to some of our most inaccessible and beautiful islands.

With just 40 or so like minded travellers we shall set sail to islands with abundant wildlife, mystical history and wonderful gardens. This unique voyage is likely to appeal to those who wish to visit some of our remotest islands and see some of its extraordinary profile sea bird life. Explore the shores for grey and common seals and the cliffs for puffins and gannets, walk amongst the ancient ruins of past habitation and enjoy the peace and tranquillity that can only be found amongst wild and spectacular scenery which has changed little over the centuries.

THE PROFESSOR MULLANOVSKIY

Built in Finland for the former Soviet Union's programme of polar and oceanographic research, she has been refurbished for expeditionary travel. The Mullanovskiy is a comfortable and well equipped vessel, accommodating a maximum of 48 passengers.

All passenger accommodation has outside views and you can choose between a two berth cabin with shower and toilet or a two bedded cabin with shared facilities.

Public areas include a lounge/bar with library, single sitting dining room, clinic, sauna, and an open bridge where passengers are free to visit at most times.



The hearty and excellent meals are supervised by European staff.

Looking after the day to day programme on board will be the expedition leader and the team. There will be no formal entertainment, but the expedition team will organise briefings and illustrated talks. For our forays ashore we will use the vessel's Zodiac craft allowing us great flexibility.

THE ITINERARY

Day 1 Dartmouth. Embark on the late afternoon and sail.

Day 2 Isles of Scilly. In the morning drop anchor off the lovely island of Treas. Walk along its cliffs, feast on the extraordinary Abbey Gardens. After lunch visit St Martin with its abundant bird life.

Day 3 Saltee Island. Sail across the Irish Sea and visit the bird sanctuary. Sail during lunch to the Waterford Coast and the charming and picturesque fishing village of Dunmore East. Here you can explore the lovely coastline or take an afternoon trip to the ancient city of Waterford and its famous glass factory.

Day 4 Dublin. Drive into the wonderfully scenic Wicklow Mountains and visit the beautifully situated gardens of Powerscourt and Mount Usher. Tour the important Dublin sights before returning to the vessel.

Day 5 Rathlin Island. One of the best kept secrets of the RSPB. Drive through flower rich meadows to the seabird cliffs of the Kibble Reserve. Sail during lunch to the Southern Hebridean Island of Cigha

and enjoy a walk across the island to Achamore House and Garden.

Day 6 Rum. Spend the morning exploring the delightful island of Rum with its red deer and recently introduced sea eagle. Sail during lunch to Barra, a private reserve which is now managed by the National Trust for Scotland.

Day 7 St Kilda. Home of our greatest concentrations of gannets and fulmars. Weather permitting, we shall land on Hirta to see the abandoned village and climb the seabird cliffs of St Kilda.

Day 8 North Rona. Our last landfall in the Hebrides will be the lovely and remote island of North Rona. In the ruins of the 18th century habitation we may find Leach's petrels nesting and nearby great black-backed gulls, great auks and puffins, also this is a breeding ground for grey seals. Afternoon at sea.

Day 9 Sheilaid/Fair Isle. South of Lerwick, just off the Eastern shoreline lies the tiny uninhabited island of Mousa. Here we will see the Broch of Mousa which probably dates back to the first two centuries of our era. It is also home to thousands of storm petrels. Sail during lunch to Fair Isle which lays claim to being the most isolated inhabited island in the UK. Enjoy a walk, visit the Bird Observatory and meet some of the 50 or so souls who live here.

Day 10 Orkney. In the morning cruise past the mile-long cliffs of Caysay with their spectacular bird life and later dock in the port of Stromness for a visit to the bird rich interior and the world famous archaeological site of Maes Howe.

Day 11 Invergordon. Disembark after breakfast.

Prices per person start from £1995 in a 3 berth cabin, from £1795 in a two bedded and from £1995 for a two berth with shower & toilet. Single cabins from £2195.

Superior and two room suites also available. Prices are fully inclusive of all meals, shore excursions and port taxes.

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WEBWORLD

■ TRAVELLERS' TALES SITE: Look at excerpts from, or order, 'The World Wide Web of United', a book of 200 articles written by world-wide United fans at <http://www.trafford.com/>

robots/97-0014.html. <http://www.mervio.com/manud/manubook.html> is a guest-book with fiery comments by both fans and enemies of Man U. <http://www.dcu.ie/~demon.co.uk/poincast/news1.html> contains the latest gossip.

<http://www.sportszineuk.co.uk> is one of UK sport's best e-zines, especially for rugby (visit the bar and special rugby site of the month), while <http://jj.payne.co.uk/rugbynet/> is a well-laid out site.

■ THE MUGGING-UP SITE: browse through the 60 or so titles on offer by typing "Manchester United" at the search prompt at <http://www.bookpages.co.uk>. The South African-originated site at <http://rugby.ru.ac.za/DATA-trivia/Overview.html> has trivia including a translation of the haka, while at the <http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Field/5855/INDEX.htm> you can visit the Unofficial English Rugby Site for links, news and club contacts.

■ "WELL, I NEVER!" — THE RANDOM SITE: "Serve in a brothel, you couldn't score in a brothel!" and other lyrics are found at the comprehensive <http://www.personal.u-net.com/pitman/songbook.htm> site.

■ THE TRAVEL BOOK-SHOP: Last week we printed an incorrect Web address. It should be <http://www.the-travelbookshop.co.uk>

SUSANNAH JOWITT

SELL, SELL 30

Market-makers remember Black Monday

BUSINESS

WEEKEND MONEY

SECTION 2 PAGES 51-64

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY OCTOBER 18 1997

Alliance would create world's biggest accounting firm

E&Y and KPMG in merger talks

By ROBERT BRUCE

ERNST & YOUNG and KPMG are likely to reveal next week that they are discussing a merger.

The resulting firm would be the largest in the world, leap-frogging in advance the proposed merger of Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand, which was announced last month. That move immediately evoked industry speculation that Ernst & Young might seek a merger, but Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, which is smaller, was favoured as its willing partner. The latest merger proposal would add pressure for the other two Big Six firms to get together.

Regulatory authorities in America, Britain and other territories would be faced with the headache of the Big Six becoming in rapid succession five, four and eventually

only three firms capable of acting for big companies round the world.

Andersen Worldwide tops the global rankings with fees of \$9.5 billion (\$6 billion). A merged Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand would top that with combined fees of \$11.8 billion. The latest proposal would pole-vault Ernst & Young and KPMG back to the top, with total fees of \$15.9 billion.

The proposal would also provoke renewed worries among finance directors. Another cut in the number of top accounting firms would shrink further their choice of financial advisers and auditors, and increase the risks of conflicts of interest.

Derek Stevens, finance director at British Airways, said that the merger would mean that "the choice of client would be narrowed further". A poll of UK finance directors after

the Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand merger news broke, showed that only 26 per cent were in favour, while 45 per cent thought it should be stopped by the competition authorities.

The proposed new firm would audit a huge chunk of the FTSE index with 40 clients all together. They include BP, British Airways, HSBC Holdings, NatWest Bank, Norwich Union and Rolls Royce.

This brings both conflict and advantages, as Mr Stevens pointed out: "While we are audited by Ernst & Young, our worldwide partners, American Airlines and Qantas, are audited by KPMG." He said: "I want my auditors to be strong, but I am not convinced mergers are necessary. It seems to me that they are protecting themselves."

Since the announcement of the Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand pro-

posals, there has been feverish activity among the other Big Six firms around the world as they considered their options. Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu would have been left adrift at the bottom of the list of global accountancy firms by the first merger.

Negotiations with competition authorities have also intensified. The feeling has been that the authorities, particularly in the US, might let just the one merger through, and, as a result, some of the other firms were known to be considering announcements of merger discussions simply to act as a spoiler for the Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand effort.

In the UK, the new firm would be the largest by some way. KPMG's last reported fee income was £624 million, and Ernst & Young's £486 million. The new UK firm would have almost 1,000 partners. There

would be some conflict in the creation of the new firm, as KPMG last year made its UK audit division into a company.

Ernst & Young has made it plain that they wanted limited liability partnership status. The firm was one of the pioneers of new legislation that would allow them to do this in Jersey. Tax experts agree that the change of structure back from incorporation into partnership status would be complex.

Much of the pressure to merge has come from the perceived need to share global costs and increased investment in information technology. Nicholas Moore, who would become chairman of the merged firm of Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand, said: "Our decision to combine has been driven by the recognition that our clients require seamless global support and unprecedented levels of expertise."

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FTSE 100	5271.1	(-18.8)
Yield	3.69%	
FTSE All share	2480.18	(-7.10)
Nikkei	17478.42	(-225.07)
Dow Jones	7875.27	(-83.61)
S&P Composite	946.93	(-8.32)

US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	8 1/4%	(8 1/4%)
Yield	6.45%	(6.45%)

LONDON MONEY		
3-month Interbank	7 1/4%	(7 1/4%)
Life long rate	110.00	(110.00)
Rate (GBP)		

STERLING		
New York	1.6180	(1.6180)
London		
\$	1.6180	(1.6204)
DM	2.2897	(2.2925)
FF	5.5425	(5.5500)
SF	2.3818	(2.3872)
Yen	193.20	(193.20)
S franc	100.5	(100.5)

US\$ vs DOLLAR		
London		
FF	1.7730	(1.7480)
FF	5.5425	(5.5500)
SF	1.4750	(1.4523)
Yen	193.20	(193.20)
S franc	100.5	(100.5)

TOKYO		
Close	Yen 126.88	

NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Dec)	\$20.40	(\$19.95)

GOLD		
London close	\$324.35	(\$328.45)
* denotes midday trading price		

BT aims for three-way telecoms tie-up in US

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

BT is believed to be planning a three-way deal with MCI and GTE, the US telephone groups, to form a world leader in telecommunications.

Between them, the two are thought to be confident that they can see off the hostile £20 billion paper bid from WorldCom. Wall Street analysts are suggesting that they may have to raise the value of the GTE offer by as much as 25 per cent to clinch the deal.

The bid battle could soon centre on the courts, where WorldCom is already trying to unravel arrangements made between BT and MCI. The legal action was launched in the Delaware courts last week, but analysts suggest that BT may be able to use the legal wrangle to keep WorldCom at bay for as long as a year.

Detailed negotiations between BT, GTE and MCI are expected to start next week. A MCI board meeting scheduled for yesterday was postponed, apparently in anticipation of new proposals from GTE and BT on how a three-way alliance could work.

Although BT has now given its permission for MCI to go outside the terms of its merger deal to talk with GTE, this does not amount to forfeiting its rights to compensation should the deal fail. The £300 million severance payment from MCI, as set out in the merger agreement, remains payable theoretically, unless the MCI board endorses the original BT bid. Given that WorldCom and GTE have now significantly topped that offer, such a move would lack all credibility on Wall Street.

Whether BT, GTE and MCI succeed in stopping WorldCom will depend on the timetable of events. WorldCom is planning to put its offer, on paper more lucrative than GTE's, to MCI shareholders in November. But the WorldCom share price may be vulnerable to any softening of the US stock market.

Although GTE's £19 billion offer is lower than WorldCom's, it is in cash. WorldCom has the added disadvantage of having to seek

full MCI shareholder approval because it is offering a stock swap rather than cash.

The emergence of the three-way deal was the result of GTE's long-standing links between Sir Iain Vallance, the BT chairman, and Charles "Chuck" Lee, the GTE chairman, who said: "The GTE model is merge GTE and MCI together and develop a global partnership with BT."

The most likely response from WorldCom to a trioka is a new higher offer for MCI. Analysts said MCI shares could eventually sell for \$50 (£37 million). This would earn BT an extra \$1.5 billion (£600 million) from its 20 per cent MCI stake if it was forced to sell out to WorldCom. GTE is currently offering \$40 and WorldCom is bidding \$41.50.

Simon Flannery, a JP Morgan analyst, said: "GTE appears very keen on working with BT and Concert in structuring a deal, and could conceivably be more accommodating than WorldCom."



Dave Best, left, and Richard Lynch picketing Barclays Bank's branch in Soho Square, central London, yesterday

Barclays strikers claim success

By RICHARD MILES BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE first of two 24-hour strikes at Barclays Bank in a pay dispute caused widespread disruption for customers yesterday, trade unions claimed.

The bank sought to play down the strike's impact, saying that only 20% of its 1,985 branches had failed to open. However, it conceded that administrative centres in northwest England had been badly affected.

UNIFI, the staff federation, and the Banking Insurance and Finance Union said that more than half of their 40,000 members had supported the one-day strike, or refused to cross picket lines. They said that 80 per cent of branches had been severely disrupted.

The dispute centres on union claims that 25,000 of the bank's 60,000 staff face a pay and pensions freeze as a result of a performance-related pay scheme introduced this year. A second 24-hour stoppage is planned for Monday.

Bob Drake, of UNIFI, said the strike could cost Barclays "tens of millions of pounds". He said support for it had been boosted by reports of £25 million of incentive payments for staff of BZW, the investment banking arm, which is for sale.

Kevin Maxwell in talks over inquiry

By RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

KEVIN MAXWELL, who was cleared of fraud and theft charges relating to the Maxwell scandal last year, is in negotiations with Department of Trade and Industry inspectors over the terms on which he will give evidence to their inquiry into the flotation of Mirror Group Newspapers.

The inquiry, set up in June 1992 by Michael Heseltine, then President of the Board of Trade, was asked to look at "the affairs and membership of Mirror Group Newspapers" and in particular the offers for sale of the company's shares at the end of April 1991.

The DTI inspectors have interviewed most of the City advisers to the float, including HSBC Merchant Bank, Salo-

n Brothers and Coopers & Lybrand. It is believed the work of the inquiry was mainly complete apart from the fact it was impossible to interview Kevin Maxwell or his brother, Ian, who was managing director of Mirror, as they were facing criminal charges. Both were cleared last year after a seven-month trial.

It is believed that Kevin Maxwell is willing to see the inspectors, but has been negotiating the terms of reference under which this takes place. In particular he wants to avoid having to relive the 130-day trial during which he was cross-examined for 21 days.

The DTI said yesterday it had no idea when the Mirror inquiry would be complete.

Market jitters in America and UK

By ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

TEN years on, few expect a repeat of the stock market crash that began on October 19, 1987. But in London and New York dealers are nervous.

The Dow Jones Industrial average fell 152 points by lunchtime, following through from Thursday's 110-point slump. The FTSE 100, which opened down almost 40 points, closed 16.8 lower, with traders reluctant to do deals and just 600 million shares going through the market.

Trading in the foreign exchange market was also volatile. Sterling made sharp gains against the mark as fears of an imminent German interest rate rise receded. The pound rose more than three pence

to close at DM2.879, recovering much of the strength it has lost since reports that the UK could make an early entry into EMU.

Two Bundesbank council members made clear in separate speeches that another German rate rise was unlikely before the end of the year.

The pound also took strength from the dollar, which climbed higher after stronger than expected industrial output and housing data revived expectations of a US interest rate rise next month.

The dollar rose a penny and half to DM1.740, while it gained half a cent against the pound to \$1.6158.

Crash anniversary, page 30

A WEEK IN THE CITY

Merger mania swept through the Square Mile on Monday morning, and as the multimillion-pound deals chased each other onto the screens, bankers and brokers relished the bonuses to come. Despite all the talk of global being the shape of investment banks to come, it was well remarked that Lazard was the favourite deal doer of the week.

Ken Clarke emerged as the favourite boardroom accessory, winning a non-executive chairman role with BAT, to be redefined as a pure tobacco company after the deal with Swiss insurer, Zurich Group.

Reed Elsevier revealed a £17 billion merger with

Wolters Kluwer, the Dutch publishers, pushing its UK shares back to where they were before the discovery of overstated circulation figures at Reed Travel Group.

Tuesday's child was Cowie Group, the car dealer and bus operator, where all sorts of toys were being out of the pram. The board is not exactly on the best of terms with Sir Tom Cowie, the group's exiled founder. They are paying £1.5 million to remove the Cowie name, which they say is holding back growth, from the group's 92,000 vehicles, in favour of a new brand called Arriva. Sir Tom's response? "This typifies the kind of idiots I have unfortunately left running the company."

Intoxicated by the chest-beating displays coming from the other telecoms moonkeys, America's GTE decided on Wednesday that it wanted to be alpha male. It bid \$28 billion (£17.5 billion) in cash for MCI, while holding out the possibility of a three-way partnership with BT, the original suitor. If GTE gets its way, the trio will presumably sit down and pick nuts out of each other's fur.

Closer to home, the Post Office and Lloyds TSB announced a massive link-up. The deal involves the Post Office opening hundreds of branches in South America. Just a joke, Sir Brian — no intention of reopening old wounds. The trial actually involves Lloyds TSB custom-

ers using their local post office as a bank.

Guinness and GrandMet capped a fine week when the European Commission approved their merger with only minor changes. The French opposition had earlier been bought off for £250 million, so M Bernard Arnault was in the right frame of mind to relax at the Paris fashion shows.

On Thursday, WH Smith gave short shrift to Tim Waterstone's revised proposals to take over the retail group — just to rub it in, it may sell the Waterstone's book chain — and T&N was bought by Federal Mogul of the US for £1.5 billion.

With so much takeover activity, Richard Branson

found himself banished from the headlines but before the end of the week he was fighting back, with the launch of Virgin Bank. Finally, the Stock Exchange cracked down on the Snake in the Grass strategy, as featured in this publication. For the uninitiated, it involves traders laying traps for ham-fisted rivals who are unable to use their computers properly. There are plenty more ways of slipping up when order-driven trading goes live on Monday morning so expect the bars around dealing rooms to be deathly at lunchtimes this week. We may never see them full again in our lifetimes.

ADAM JONES

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New pub group attracts leisure backers

By Dominic Walsh

A CLUTCH of leisure industry entrepreneurs, including Michael Cannon, Luke Johnson and David Bruce, have emerged as backers of Sirenia, a new pub company with plans to float on the Alternative Investment Market within the next 12 months.

It was announced yesterday that Sirenia is to pay £15.8 million for 31 pubs being sold by Regent Inns and Grosvenor Inns, the quoted pub operators. The units, most in London and the South East, have a combined turnover of £11.1 million and operating profits of about £2 million.

Sirenia is paying Grosvenor just under £9 million for 15 pubs, including four Hedgehog and Hogshead outlets, while Regent is offloading ten of its smaller pubs and three undeveloped sites for £4.4 million. A further six Regent pubs operated under management contract are being acquired for £1.5 million. Regent and Grosvenor have agreed to accept part of the purchase price in Sirenia shares. Grosvenor will hold up to 16.9 per cent, while Regent will take up to 13.8 per cent.

Among the fledgling group's backers, Mr Bruce, founder of the Firkin pub chain, is stepping down this month from the Grosvenor Inns board chaired by Tim Thwaites, and Luke Johnson, is chairman of PizzaExpress. The third main backer, Mr Cannon, last year sold his Magic Pub Company to Greene King for £200 million.

Two other former Magic Pub executives, Colin Stevens and Tim Fearn, are to become, respectively, managing director and finance director of Sirenia. The non-executive directors are Roger Looker, who recently resigned as deputy chairman of Grosvenor, and Michael Mills, former finance director at Grosvenor.

An industry source said that Sirenia was an off-the-shelf name, and that the company would be renamed once a new brand to be used across the company's estate had been decided upon. Further acquisitions are likely in the run-up to the AIM listing, and some of the high-profile backers are expected to be invited to join the board.

For Grosvenor, the disposals, which are subject to shareholder approval, are part of a strategy unveiled in August to focus solely on the Sirenia and Lettuce chain in an attempt to boost returns and revive its flagging share price.

Tempos, page 31



David Bruce, left, who is leaving Grosvenor Inns to back a new pub group, with Tim Thwaites, his chairman

Socialists salute £4bn French Telecom sell-off

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

FRANCE'S Socialist-led Government yesterday trumpeted the success of its partial privatisation of France Telecom, which has attracted 3.8 million small shareholders and widespread interest from institutional investors.

The Government will raise Fr38.6 billion (£4 billion) from the flotation of a 30.9 per cent stake on the Paris and New York stock exchanges on Monday. It will receive a further Fr3.4 billion from the sale of a 2.3 per cent stake to staff.

Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the finance minister, said institutional investors had applied for shares worth a total of Fr420 billion, more than 20 times the Fr19.4 billion tranche reserved for them. Two thirds of the applications were made from abroad, and a fifth were from America.

The French public, he said, had sought to buy Fr50 billion of shares and would be offered a stake of Fr19.2 billion. About half the company's 165,000 employees had also applied.

Next year, Deutsche Telekom is set to obtain a stake of between 5 and 10 per cent as part of a share exchange deal with its French counterpart.

M Strauss-Kahn said the sell-off had matched France's privatisation of Paribas, the bank, in 1987. Since then, only the sale of the BNP Bank in

1993 and Elf Aquitaine in 1994 have attracted more than 3 million small shareholders.

Michel Bon, France Telecom's chairman, said last month that he hoped for 2 million share applications. With the firm's share price expected to rise on Monday above the Fr187 fixed by the Government, many members of the public are likely to sell their stake swiftly.

The Socialists, yesterday described the sale as a "formidable success". Before taking power in June they had opposed the privatisations. Their U-turn helped to explain market reservations over the future of France Telecom.

Analysts are concerned that the firm, the world's fourth-biggest operator, remains ill-equipped to deal with market liberalisation next year. They point out that the French state will retain a controlling stake of about 65 per cent.

Although M Bon has reinforced the commercial operation, the company may be vulnerable to rivals such as BT in the medium term, some analysts believe.

The Government has said the money will be used largely to bolster the finances of state-owned groups such as Thomson Multimedia, the consumer electronics concern, and GAN, the insurance group.

UNDER the slogan: "Capitalists of the World Unite" *Forbes*, the US monthly business magazine, has detailed its plans to go global.

Only about 8,000 out of a current circulation of 782,000 go abroad. Robert Forbes, president of Forbes Global Business & Finance and one of the four Forbes brothers who run the private publishing empire, hopes to have a guaranteed circulation of 50,000 for the global edition by the April launch.

The new venture, which has already cost several million dollars, is a response to the increasing globalisation of business and industry. *Forbes*, founded in 1917, is the oldest of the major business magazines in the US.

Europe and Asia are each expected to provide about 40 per cent of sales. Domingo Felipe Cavallo, former Argentine Minister of the Economy and Public Works, will be publisher and a columnist. The October cover features a picture of Carol Browner of the US Environmental Protection Agency. The text says: "Watch Out for this woman. The EPA's Carol Browner is exploiting health and the environment to build a power base."

IBM seeks volunteers for cuts in jobs worldwide

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

IBM is believed to have made the world's biggest redundancy offer. The computer group has asked its 240,000 employees worldwide to consider voluntary redundancy in an effort to cut costs.

The job losses will hit hardest in the underperforming software and mid-range computer divisions and could save \$500 million (£312 million) in the near future. IBM declined to specify UK job losses.

Employees are being offered a so-called "buyout package" that includes eight to 26 weeks' pay, a \$2,500 retraining grant and six months free medical insurance. Elderly employees are being offered early retirement on full pay. If insufficient numbers accept the offer then compulsory redundancies will become inevitable. Details of the offer will be sent out over the next three weeks.

An IBM spokesman said: "We have to take the steps we are taking to improve our competitive posture. This is an ongoing process in this company." He did not disclose the target number of employees.

The computer giant is attempting to repeat a successful restructuring exercise of a decade ago. Between 1985 and 1994 IBM cut its workforce from 400,000 to 220,000. Since then the number has crept back to 240,000 while its performance has fallen back.

The latest voluntary redundancy program was hatched this summer during a cost review orchestrated by Lawrence Ricardi, the interim finance director.

The group is expected to announce a 12 per cent increase in quarterly profits on Monday. Last year it had annual revenues of \$75 billion.

Trade crisis threat over US-Japan shipping row

FROM ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO

A DISPUTE over restrictive practices in Japanese ports threatened to develop into a trade crisis between Washington and Tokyo yesterday as negotiators struggled to hammer out a last-minute deal.

Japan angrily denounced a US move to ban its cargo ships from American ports, and left open the possibility of retaliatory sanctions if a settlement was not reached.

The row escalated on Thursday when the US Federal Maritime Commission denied entry to Japanese ships after three shipowners failed to pay

some \$4 million in fines due by Wednesday. The FMC imposed the sanctions in a row over Japanese port practices, which the United States says discriminate against foreign carriers.

Japan's three leading shipping companies — Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha, Mitsui O.S.K. Lines and Nippon Yusen KK — said they had not paid the fines because negotiations were still in progress. The \$4 million (£2.5 million) total has built since September 4 when the FMC set a surcharge of \$100,000 for every port call in the US by vessels operated by the companies.

Forbes plans to unite capitalists of the world

By Raymond Snoddy, Media Editor

UNDER the slogan: "Capitalists of the World Unite" *Forbes*, the US monthly business magazine, has detailed its plans to go global.

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BGT agrees to clarify benefits of Goldfish

OFGAS, the gas industry regulator, told Centrica that its British Gas Trading arm should make clear to holders of Goldfish credit cards that they can get a cash refund on any points earned on the card if they switch to an alternative gas supplier. The regulator, however, said it had no objection to the Goldfish credit card providing certain measures are taken.

Ogas was ruling on concerns about anti-competitiveness and discrimination arising from BGT's involvement in the card and its likely impact on competition in the domestic gas supply market. BGT has agreed to make it clear on its gas bills that Goldfish points can be redeemed against customers' final BGT accounts if they wish to change to a new supplier.

Airline code-share plan

DEUTSCHE BA, the German subsidiary of British Airways, said yesterday that it hoped to sign code-share deals with carriers such as American Airlines, Qantas and Iberia by next summer under a network expansion plan. Carl Michel, managing director, said that the code-share agreements would allow the airline to offer new international routes as well as European destinations without having to fly in competition to Lufthansa, Germany's national carrier.

SEP seeks to raise cash

SEP Industrial Holdings plans to raise about £2.52 million through a placing of nine million shares. The company said that it remained confident that the second half would show the substantial improvement in overall trading results that was anticipated in the interim statement published on May 28. It added that given the improvement in trading and the board's confidence regarding the current financial year the directors' intention remained to recommend a final dividend for the year to September 1997 of 0.8p net per ordinary share.

Kellogg \$150m charge

KELLOGG, the breakfast cereals company, yesterday said that the closure of three European plants, announced last month, would give rise to a \$150 million charge. Kellogg is closing plants in Latvia, Denmark and Italy, with the loss of a total of 400 jobs, resulting in annual savings of up to \$70 million. Production is being transferred to other European factories, including those at Manchester, and Wrexham in North Wales. Other plants are located at Bremen in Germany and Valls in Spain.

Medisys needle deal

MEDISYS, the medical systems designer, has won American Food and Drug Administration approval to market its NCI800 system designed to destroy hypodermic needles instantly at the point of use. Medisys said: "Approval will enable Medisys to commence distribution of the NCI800 in the US." The company is in discussions with nationwide distributors to launch the product in America early in 1998. It estimates \$3 billion (£1.8 million) is the annual cost of treating injuries from undisposed needles in the US health system.

Wace disposal in US

WACE, the printing group, has sold its imaging business, Offset Separations Corp, based in Arizona, to International Color Services for around \$2.7 million (£1.7 million). Wace said it would receive a \$10,000 cash deposit, \$800,000 in cash and approximately \$1.9 million in non-interest bearing promissory notes, payable on completion. Offset Separations made a pre-tax profit of \$160,000 on sales of \$8.1 million in 1996, and had net assets of \$1.9 million on December 31 that year. The net disposal proceeds will be used to reduce borrowings.

Texaco buys retail sites

TEXACO has signed a 24-site service station deal with Conoco, which includes the purchase of 19 of Conoco's Jet-branded sites to Texaco and a straight asset swap of five retail sites across Britain. No financial details were given but the deal will strengthen Texaco's retail network in western and Southern England, and strengthen Jet's position around the Humber region. The 19 sites will be rebranded and open at the beginning of 1998. The five swapped sites will be incorporated into the respective company-owned networks.

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Online for school orders

By Chris Adams

THE Government's commitment to spend £100 million on updating computers and software in schools has sparked an explosion in educational software publishers competing to sign licensing and distribution deals in the UK.

At this year's Frankfurt Book Fair, where more than 1,620 multimedia companies are trying to capitalise on the £60 billion world educational software market, an entire hall has been devoted to multimedia learning.

Most companies have their eyes firmly fixed on the UK, which at present spends about £6 million each year on software for schools.

The industry believes that this market — once dominated by BBC and Acorn computers and software — is set for massive growth. Last week



Tony Blair, left, talks to Bill Gates about government plans

Tony Blair met Bill Gates, of Microsoft, to discuss the Government's plan to connect all Britain's 32,000 schools to the Internet before 2002.

International giants, such as Microsoft, will face a battle with leading UK players such as Dorling Kindersley, Anglia Multimedia and BBC Worldwide, and smaller companies such as The Q Group, which

is listed on the Alternative Investment Market.

Paul Poulter, managing director of Q Multimedia said: "People have been waiting for the UK market to kick-start and the Government seems to be helping that to happen. At the same time the industry is maturing and we are seeing consolidation starting to happen in the market."

TOURIST RATES		
	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.31	2.14
Austria Sch	21.09	19.37
Belgium Fr	62.25	57.29
Canada \$	2.369	2.181
Cyprus Cyp£	0.888	0.817
Denmark Kr	11.46	10.80
Finland Mk	9.14	8.39
France Fr	10.07	9.39
Germany DM	3.23	2.78
Greece Dr	475	435
Hong Kong \$	13.38	12.18
Ireland Ir£	1.28	1.08
Israel Sh	0.03	0.03
Italy Lit	2971	2734
Japan Yen	286.33	191.80
Malta	0.887	0.808
Netherlands Gld	3.417	3.122
New Zealand \$	2.85	2.44
Norway Kr	12.10	11.18
Portugal Esc	304.08	282.02
S Africa Rd	6.52	7.35
Spain Pta	233.89	234.50
Sweden Kr	13.17	12.07
Switzerland Fr	2.34	2.32
Turkey Lira	286248	278370
USA \$	1.725	1.582

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

MERGER MANIA

The common thread running through most of these mega-mergers is globalisation. Everyone is boasting of becoming one of the biggest of their kind in Europe, America or the world. Small-is-beautiful is these days a phrase applicable only to mobile phones...

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Merger
hit
sides
by MAIL



The Virgin Bank has been a long time in the planning but here it is. And whereas many of Richard Branson's new launches look remarkably like other companies' products in Virgin clothing, this one shows signs of original thinking.

Although starting small, it represents yet another challenge to the unimaginative high street banks that are already under attack by the new breed of supermarket financiers.

The essence of Virgin's new account is the belief that borrowing for house purchase is no different to borrowing to buy the furniture to put in it: a mortgage is merely debt by another name. Mr Branson suggests that people simplify their lives by bundling all their debt in his direction and combining their banking into a single account.

The monthly statements might be a trifle disconcerting to start with for those used to keeping their current accounts conscientiously in the black while a hefty mortgage exists, merely as a standing order to the building society but at least, they will produce an accurate snapshot of individuals' net wealth, or lack of it.

Those with a sizeable deficit will appeal most to Mr Branson, who would naturally prefer that customers were paying interest to him rather than he to them. It is the opposite approach from that of the supermarkets, who are proving popular deposit-takers with

their relatively generous rates of interest coupled with their convenience. Royal Bank of Scotland is tackling the changing shape of banking from both sides, in partnership with both Virgin and Tesco.

Royal Bank's high street rivals will have to move fast to find ways of dealing with the innovations outsiders are bringing to banking. What both the supermarkets and Richard Branson major on is providing what customers want.

The clearing banks have tended to the opposite approach and are now paying the price in seeing their customers being lured elsewhere.

Perhaps one should applaud Barclays for trying to retaliate in supermarket style, but its efforts last week to launch a reward card for day-to-day banking do not seem destined to bring customers flocking.

So far, merely at the experimental stage, the scheme is highly complicated but will award points for various transactions. Amass 125 points, and a McDonald's Happy Meal can be yours. Do a bit more banking, and notch up 2,000 points, and you can have... 3 CDs from a Virgin Megastore. Whoever

Lessons from wise Virgin



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

thought the battle would ever be fought on efficient service and the best rates?

The scheme rewards the use of debit cards and standing orders and offers bonuses for those who have been long-standing customers. But the banks will have to think of more original ideas than this if they are to hold onto their customers. Gimmicks will lose their appeal very rapidly in the face of branches closed by strike action.

Will BT triumph over adversity?

The word is that over at BT's headquarters, the mood is remarkably bullish. What looked like turning into an expensive fiasco may yet be salvaged as a triumph of strategic planning.

Well, perhaps not even the BT spin doctors will be able to achieve quite that cosmetic feat

but there are indications that disaster is being avoided. With two other suitors now in the ring for MCI, BT is saved from having to go through with its own, embarrassingly reduced, £15 billion bid. Instead, it has a choice of options. It could shut the door and walk away, hoping to collect on the £300 million that MCI will be obliged to pay should it choose to join forces with another, more generous, bidder than BT. It can be obstructive, and try to stop any other bidder taking on MCI. Or it can try and use its position to negotiate an involvement in a new US based telecoms business at a much lowered financial risk than it had originally been contemplating.

Should the last be what BT managers want — and there are some in the City who would still advocate the first option instead — then BT is in a relatively strong position to argue its corner, with its 20 per cent stake

in MCI and established Concert joint venture. Concert was part of BT's strategy for winning all the international telecommunications business from global players. It is still little more than an ambition, with 3,000 customers, but the estimates are that it could break-even next year. As the major partner in the venture, BT may see some mileage in continuing to play the Concert line.

There is clear hostility to WorldCom but it seems that BT may prefer to come to a congenial arrangement with GTE. The telecoms business is a small world and it seems that BT and GTE are far from strangers.

Currently, GTE's cash offer for MCI would see it lumbered with a heavy debt burden. Perhaps Sir Iain Vallance could suggest easing the pain of that in return for an important role in the new business?

Personalities play a huge part in sorting out international deals. If the BT team and the

GTE boys do have good relationships, then it is likely that they would favour that route to international expansion rather than the Cable & Wireless link which has long looked like the logical step for both companies.

But just as personalities may favour the GTE link, it seems they may continue to put C&W out of bounds.

Apres BT le deluge

Now France is to have its own version of BT, if only over the skint body of its Socialist government. Let us hope more is learnt from Britain than the mechanics of privatisation.

National stereotyping does not make us think of the French as naive. Yet gullible Gauls lapped up shares in Eurotunnel long after Brits realised that free journeys for original buyers were the only thing worth having. Then they were stuffed with Euro Disney comme foie gras.

Now a 3.8 million strong *grande armée* of innocents has leapt forward waving 50 billion francs for shares in France Télécom. Would they have been

so open-walleted if they had asked *les rosbifs*? Many of us can still remember believing in liberating great utilities from the dead hand of state bureaucracy and linking our fortunes to their exciting new future of freedom.

Sadly, it did not work out. As an investment, BT was great for a month, OK for one year, dreary over five. After 13 years, £100 invested in BT is valued at about £250, while a similar investment in the all-share index would be worth nearer £450.

Instead of freedom came Ofel shackles, political attacks and often the status of public enemy number one. But the regime imposed on BT got worse, the more of its shares the government sold. Only 23 per cent of France Télécom was on the block. As a minister was quick to claim, investors showed faith in a money-maker controlled by the state. Maybe not so naive.

Young at heart

The interest of Peter Young, Morgan Grenfell's one-time star fund manager, probably explains why a Canadian mining hopeful of seeking its fortune in the Ukraine should be quoted on the Stock Exchange's Alternative Investment Market. Ashurst Technology is now withdrawing in high dudgeon, irked by the small-minded, irrelevant demands that it should meet AIM's rather modest rules. Sounds like Mr Young's kind of company.

Merger talks hit sales by MAID

BY FRASER NELSON

MAID, the online database company negotiating a £261 million merger with rival Knight-Ridder, has given a warning to the market that uncertainty over the deal has been scoring off new subscribers.

Dan Wagner, 34, the chief executive, said that new customers — on which MAID relies for most of its revenues — were holding back since the company announced in August that it was in talks with Knight-Ridder. This led to flat sales of around £7.3 million in July, August and September.

He said: "We have a very large order book but then everyone found that we were doing this deal."

"The customers were saying, 'Hang on, are we going to get more data or a special deal?' Our sales people can't answer them, and that makes them frustrated because they

don't get their bonuses."

He added: "So it's just been delayed a little but we are definitely going to get them later; the question is just how much more are we going to get from them."

The news dampened slightly the enthusiasm MAID's merger has aroused in the City so far. One analyst said: "A couple of quiet months is obviously not the end of the world, but this merger is being financed by a huge amount of debt, which leaves no room for failure."

City institutions which have agreed to back its £120 million fundraising had been aware of the trading statement before making the investment. The fundraising has been made at 220p a share — against the 115p at which made shares are still suspended.

Yesterday the company completed its ambitious fundraising programme, securing a total of £283 million from selling new shares and taking on high-interest debt. However, it intends to save £20 million a year from Knight-Ridder after axing some 300 jobs and moving all its hard data to California. It has also taken on £170 million of debt, and will be paying £16 million a year to service the borrowings.

After the merger, Mr Wagner says that MAID will have 25 per cent of the online information market, overtaking the 24 per cent share of Lexis Nexis, which belongs to Reed Elsevier.

Lexis, he said, will be the company's only competitor. "We are going to be the only company with a service in five types of markets. When you come with such a wealth of content, you undermine everyone else."

Shares in Dialog Corporation, MAID's new name, are due to be relisted next month when its shareholders take a vote on the acquisition. Traders say that they could reopen at anything between 230p and 300p.



Dan Wagner, right, chief executive of MAID, with Derek Smith, managing director

Frederick Cooper chiefs share £1m

BY CHRIS AVRES

TWO senior executives of Frederick Cooper, the beleaguered housewares and coatings group, are believed to have shared around £1 million in compensation for loss of office.

Ed Kirk, who resigned suddenly as chief executive last month, is believed to have been paid about £575,000, while John Staitie, who resigned yesterday as finance director, is understood to have taken about £425,000.

This sum is equivalent to almost one quarter of the troubled company's current stock market value. Cooper's share price has collapsed from 120p three years ago, to just 11p. It has issued three profits warnings this year, and expects to report a small pre-tax loss for the year, more than £3 million behind its forecasts of two months ago.

WH Smith investors get chance to quiz directors

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

DISGRUNTLED shareholders in WH Smith will get their chance to question the board next week when the troubled retail group holds its annual meeting before embarking on a series of meetings with its institutional investors.

The annual meeting, on Wednesday, will give small investors their first opportunity since Bill Cockburn's resignation as chief executive, Tim Waterstone's two bid approaches, and the company's unveiling of a demerger plan, to tell the directors what they think of their actions.

Meetings between Richard Handover, WH Smith's new chief executive, and all of its big institutional investors, planned for yesterday and the

day before, were postponed after the company was put into an offer period by the Takeover Panel after Mr Waterstone's second approach. After the group rejected that approach on Thursday, the offer period ended.

Institutions are keen to hear details of how the board, chaired by Jeremy Hardie, intends to revitalise the main, poorly-performing high street chain, which will be at the centre of the business once the company carries out its plan to demerge the Waterstone's bookstore chain and sell the music businesses Virgin/Our Price and The Wall.

Mr Waterstone has kept a low profile since the rejection of his second approach, except

to say that he is appalled by the decision to sell Waterstone's, which he founded and then sold to WH Smith. He has ruled out a hostile bid and his advisers say that he is waiting to hear institutional investors' opinion of the situation before deciding whether to take his proposals further.

Mr Waterstone is to open the second branch of his embryonic Daisy & Tom children's store chain next month. The new store is to open on November 13 in Deansgate, Manchester. The first store opened in King's Road, London, this summer. The new shop's range will include toys, clothes, books, shoes, sports equipment, children's vehicles and bicycles.

Former teacher pockets £4.9m in share sale

PizzaExpress trio trim stakes

BY JASON NISSE

A FORMER teacher who washed dishes at his local pizza restaurant while at training college, yesterday made £4.9 million by cashing in shares in the company that he helped to build up.

David Page, the 45-year-old chief executive of PizzaExpress, yesterday sold 600,000 shares in the company at 82p each. He still has 410,000 shares.

The two City white-kids who brought the company to market, via a reverse takeover four years ago, also sold shares,

pocketing more than £2 million. Luke Johnson, a former City analyst and journalist who is now PizzaExpress chairman, sold 100,000 shares and retains 288,000. Hugh Osmond, a non-executive director, disposed of 150,000 shares, to leave himself with 105,000. The three men also hold deferred convertible shares valued last night at £3.9 million.

Mr Page first worked in a PizzaExpress franchise in 1973 to augment his student grant. After training, he spent just one term teaching 11-year-olds. "That was quite enough

for me," he said yesterday. He then joined Peter Botz, founder of PizzaExpress, and helped to build up the group through the 1970s and 1980s. The 1993 flotation of PizzaExpress valued Mr Page's stake in the group at £4.2 million, half of which he took as cash and half as shares, then priced at 42p each.

Mr Page has gradually reduced his stake in PizzaExpress, recouping more than £10 million. Yesterday he said that he did not care about money. "Health and sanity are much more important," he said.

Chief bids £39.5m for Dwyer Estates

BY CYRIL AVRES

JOEY ESFANDI, chief executive of Dwyer Estates, the property group, has made a 70p-a-share agreed cash bid for the company, valuing it at £35.9 million. The offer has been made through Park Street Properties, an investment vehicle controlled by Mr Esfandi and William Oliver, Dwyer's finance director.

Mr Esfandi and Mr Oliver said they wanted to take the company private because its shares had continued to trade at a discount to their net asset value. Mr Esfandi said that this had restricted the company's ability to raise money for expansion.

He said: "Without this ability to access the capital markets, I believe there are few reasons for Dwyer to continue as a quoted public company."

Park Street already owns 24.1 per cent of Dwyer, and 21 per cent of shareholders have accepted its offer. There will be a vote on November 27, when the remaining shareholders will make up their minds. Mr Oliver said: "Twenty one per cent doesn't sound a lot but there are others who will carry the day."

Ashurst leaves AIM amid accusations

BY FRASER NELSON

A RESOURCES company backed by Peter Young, Morgan Grenfell's disgraced fund manager, quit the Alternative Investment Market (AIM) yesterday, claiming it had been poorly served by investors in London.

Ashurst Technology, a Ukrainian gold explorer registered in Bermuda, said it was quitting the junior exchange in disgust at the failings of the London Stock Exchange.

Benton Wilcoxon, the Albanian entrepreneur who persuaded Mr Young to invest some £12 million of Morgan Grenfell's funds in the company, said the exchange had failed to provide an adequate trading environment.

He complained of "poor communication between AIM and our nominated adviser, and the overall ineffectiveness of AIM as a liquid trading market," and concluded that "AIM has regulatory problems and is dysfunctional for Ashurst and the needs of our investors."

The London Stock Exchange dismissed the accusations, saying that neither its AIM team nor Henderson Crosthwaite, Ashurst's nominated adviser, understood what Mr Wilcoxon was refer-

ring to. David Hickey, managing director of Henderson's corporate finance, said: "We have a dozen AIM clients and the sad thing is that we talk to the AIM team almost every day. To say there was poor communication is just not true."

"My guess is that they came to London expecting to gain more shareholders, but there was been zero interest from the punters, so they pulled out."

Ashurst, which runs from a main office in Kiev, is listed in Toronto and will continue its Canada listing. It said it had cleared the matter with Morgan Grenfell, which still owns 48 per cent of the shares.

City sources said that Ashurst had come into conflict with the Stock Exchange over disclosure, including instances when the annual report was posted to shareholders without the results appearing on the London dealing screens.

Ashurst shares, which joined the market at 30p each in May 1996, have plunged from 88p to 40p this year. However, in Toronto, they have risen from 44 cents to 80 cents.

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CHANGING TIMES

Rudolph Agnew's base camp is a seven-minute walk from his home in Eaton Terrace. It is housed in a bright blue painted building with rickety stairs, and there is a bicycle perched on one of the roofs behind. His great chum, the swashbuckling gold man Peter Hambro, is his landlord and runs his mining empire from here too. It is exactly seven minutes from his house as well.

The two giggle like schoolboys. "This is the new financial centre of London, you know. We get the tourists buses to point us out," grins Hambro.

On Agnew's computer screen is a vivid image of a partly naked Pamela Anderson, a present from his children, which he says his third wife disapproves of, even though she knows how much he treasures the opposite sex.

Agnew is weary but perks up when battle talk starts. With Diet Coke and Galka on tap, here is a man ready for war. "You see, I'm naturally rather indolent," he says. For the fourth time in a decade the co-chairman of ConsGold is bang in the middle of a meaty takeover. He is defending Redland, the ailing aggregates business, and the predator is the French Lafarge rival, which is eager to gobble Redland's huge European tiling division. Agnew was headhunted to chair Redland two years ago, after the board cut the dividend in what investors cynically described as the "immaculate deception".

Cavalier Confederate goes into battle for Redland

Now recession has bitten deep into its German and French operations and although Agnew and his team have begun pruning they have found it difficult in such high labour cost countries. After the third profit warning last month, Agnew launched another review. It was too late; the Gauls pounced this week.

"I'm not surprised because the share price was vulnerable," says Agnew. "But it's a pity too we just started talking to investors to give them some idea of our plans. Independence is never the only option — that is a dangerous strategy. We have to show the true value of this business."

Agnew does not agree that he is a professional undertaker. "That's not true at all. I have always made shareholders money. At ConsGold I may have lost the battle, but we got an excellent price for shareholders. Losing the TVS franchise was a mistake, and I share the blame for that, but again investors made a lot of money. At Lasso we won, we saw off Enterprise Oil."

Why is he good at it? "Defence is far more enjoyable than attack and I've done both sides. I guess the answer is I love playing games, and these are executive games. Maybe I'm good at

IN THE HOT SEAT

Rudolph Agnew
Born 1934
School: Downside
Army: 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars
1957-59: Consolidated Gold Fields
1990-93: chairman and chief executive TVS
1994: Chairman, Lasso
1995: Chairman, Redland

leadership too and at bad jokes at those midnight-burning-the-oil hours. You see, I love crosswords and jigsaw puzzles and this is similar. Big decisions are easy for me, but I'm hopeless at the small ones."

Agnew is not everybody's cup of

tea. Some City men find him a little too flamboyant, too forthright, but even so most respect him as someone who makes them money. They are hoping he will do the same again.

Much of his urbane daredevil manner may come from the great tragedy in his life. His eldest son died at 20 in a car crash. "Conventional ambition died a sudden death. That sort of third pew at Westminster Abbey stuff didn't matter any more. I hope I became less arrogant, a kinder person," he says.

Agnew is crazy about gold and everything rocky. "It's a rough and tough business — you can pick it up and feel it. It's so exciting because explorers and miners were often the first people into so many places. You get the sense of actually creating something," he explains.

He spent 30 years travelling the world at ConsGold, where his grandfather had also been chairman, until the fateful bid in the 1980s. He proved himself every bit a fighter, earning the reputation for strong independence that has given him his latest situation.

As so often with converts, the Irish Agnew plays the role of the English

country gent every bit as well, if not better, than the locals. He is not the clubby sort, however. He does not take holidays, which annoys his wife, preferring to shoot birds, garden and walk his dogs at their comfortable Wiltshire country house. "Not grand," he smiles.

Researching a history of the Southern American Confederacy between 1790 and 1840 is his abiding passion and his understanding of that period fuels his dislike of a European Union. "The early constitutionalists never meant America to be federal. Most of the states never harmonised their taxes or prices and I think that is why it was successful. That is Europe's mistake."

Agnew is romantic and passionate about England, but worries that the liberal streak in the English leaves them vulnerable to danger. "When I was eight I became a Confederate, at 19 I walked the battlefields and became a Confederate Cavalier. All my decisions come like that, instantly."

It is a history he will finish if, and when, he ever takes it easy. "It's rather like pursuing a beautiful girl. The chase is the most exciting part. Retirement feels too close to death, doesn't it?"

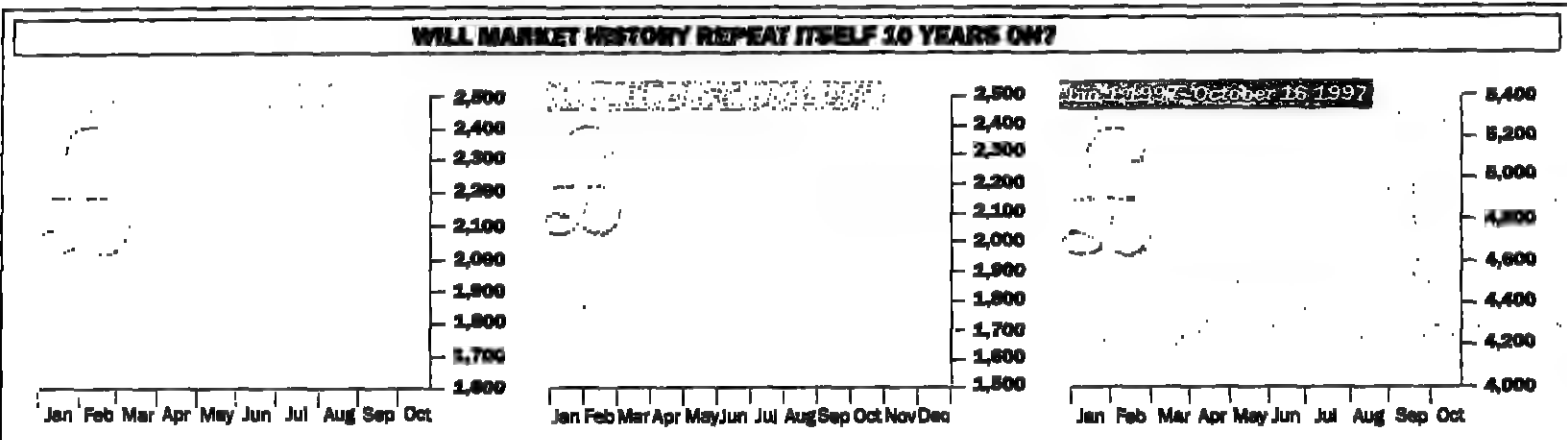
After our meeting I hear that Agnew worries that he came across as a frightful chauvinist. He does, but an absolutely charming one, and I don't believe for one moment that he was worried.



Rudolph Agnew loves to play executive games

MARGARETA PAGANO

Crash anniversary touches off market nervousness



Ten years on from the stock market crash that began on October 19, 1987, it is not hard to detect a certain nervousness. For bizarre reasons of its own, the Stock Exchange has chosen the anniversary of Black Monday as the day to introduce the new and unfamiliar system of order-driven share trading. More importantly, many investors already believe share prices in the US and the UK are looking expensive. And in another echo of the Eighties, in the last month there has been a flurry of multibillion pound takeover bids, some of dubious merit.

Although shares on Wall Street have slipped over the past few days, it is difficult to see the sword that is going to floor this bull market. Inflation is low, economic growth is continuing, and the flow of money into shares is plentiful.

Paul Durman checks out the memories of City movers of Black Monday on October 19, 1987

The very fact that large pension fund managers such as PPFM and Gartmore are holding so much of their clients' money in cash suggests that the investor euphoria that precedes a crash has yet to take hold. Comparing 1987 with today, Clive Boothman, managing director of Schroder Unit Trusts, says: "There don't seem to be quite so many people telling me that trees grow to the sun. The optimism is not unbounded. It does not feel quite the same."

Memories of 1987 are inevitably entwined with the great storm that wrought havoc across southern England on the night of Thursday, October 15. As Wall Street started to crack on the Friday, London's dealing rooms were half empty, with brokers and market-makers stranded in the Home Counties.

David Rough, chief executive of Legal & General Investment Management, was looking after investments for Royal Insurance's life fund. He says: "The market fell was not that good on the week prior to the crash. I was generally getting nervous."

But the hurricane dominated the City's thoughts on Friday and little work was done. Mr Rough says: "By Monday, everybody else seemed to have the same idea of selling and we found out there were no buyers outside. We just sat back gobsmacked by the tidal wave of red. It was just totally rabbits in headlight — not believing what we were seeing. It was a frightening two weeks."

Dave MacNamara, now head of dealing at Winterford Securities, was then working for County NatWest. He also believes the hurricane played a major role because it prevented investors from selling shares that they had bought without paying for them — a quirk of the old two-week account trading system. When Monday arrived, these speculators were forced sellers because they were holding stock they could not pay for.

Mr MacNamara recalls an empty feeling. "We lost in six hours about 30 per cent of what it had taken us nine months to make," David Bailey, who was working for UBS Phillips & Drew, says: "The thing that made it so dramatic was the mile-long queue of people wanting to sell outside Fidelity's offices in the US." He says American mutual managers, led by Fidelity, dumped UK shares to help to satisfy investors clamouring for their money.

The 1987 crash gave Michael Hart, the veteran fund manager who is chairman of Foreign & Colonial Management, one of the proudest episodes of his career. Yet at the time, he says, "we were absolutely terrified like everybody else."

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Spice curl

IT APPEARS all is not sweetness and light at Société Générale, where Nicolas Horlick is attempting to set up a fund management operation while bringing up five children, moving house and writing an informative and interesting book about how to be a fund manager, bring up five children etc etc. Indeed, La Horlick is clearly working so hard that she has no time to get to the hairdresser.

The aggro is because of how much Nicolas and her team, which includes John Richards from Mercury Asset Management, are being paid. The brokers and bankers at SocGen, having looked at the generous package, have dubbed her "Greedy Spice".

could not go forth without some sort of freebie. So Virgin is giving away shares of Pison Siena organisers. Mine's being donated to charity.

Ground rules

ASSOCIATION football is not the sort of game normally associated with Paul Orchard-Lisle. The urbane and dapper senior partner of surveyors Healey & Baker probably thinks a round ball is something you hit with a mallet while riding a horse.

But Orchard-Lisle is becoming acquainted with the terms "on me head, son" and "sick as a parrot" after being hired to advise not one but two top football clubs. First, Healey is looking at possible alternative sites for Arsenal should Islington council refuse the Premiership leaders permission to knock down half of Highbury to extend its stadium. Now

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

SOMEONE has a wicked sense of humour at Mitsubishi Motors. Stephen Dixon, managing director of the UK arm of the Japanese carmaker, has been grinning bravely through the pain since giving up smoking. Dixon has been using nicotine patches to break the habit but it was still a struggle. Imagine his astonishment when he discovered hawks at the London Motor Show at Earls Court were given a gift of a decorative polished piston head, which twisted apart to become an ashtray.

Pigs will fly

WILL the woes of petfood-to-pig semen group Dalgey ever end? With Felix and Arthur off their food, Dalgey has high hopes of its high-flying Pig Improvement Company. Only it is not that high flying. Plans to airfreight 665 breeding pigs to Vietnam have been put off until later this year because of problems supplying the pigs. Apparently the condi-

tions for the porkers on the flight were due to be quite luxurious, with three decks of pens and regularly refilled water tanks. No word on the inflight movie, though. Babe and Animal Farm are favourites.

Card tricks

WINTERTHUR, the Swiss-owned insurer, has been having a few teething problems with its new credit card. First, the company wanted to emblazon the Swiss flag on all its cards, as a symbol of the mother country. This caused problems with the Red Cross, which regards such an image as too close to its own. Undeterred, management looked to the mountains of Switzerland for inspiration, but ran into difficulties with the national tourist office, which didn't want them used on the card. The insurer says the launch of the card has now been postponed because of problems with the credit risk of potential customers.

JASON NISSE

roker hits 1
good share r

Broker hits TI Group's good share run for six

TI Group was the worst performing share among the top 100 companies, its shares tumbling 38p, or almost 6 per cent, to 631.1p.

Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the broker, did the damage. It reduced the engineer's profits estimate for the current year and downgraded its recommendation from "add" to "hold".

It was understood to be selling clients yesterday that the shares have run far enough for the time being, having hit a peak of 690p recently. It remains positive about long-term prospects, but has cut its profit numbers for 1997 by £5 million, to £226 million and for 1998 from £261 million to £255 million. More than 4.5 million shares had changed hands by the close.

Shares generally ended the week on a subdued note, with fund managers choosing to hold fire ahead of the start of order-driven trading on Monday. The overnight setback for Wall Street spilled over into London, although prices closed above their worst levels despite heavy losses for the Dow Jones industrial average last night.

The FTSE 100 index halved an earlier 40-point fall to end the session 16.8 down at 5,271.1. But it still ended 43.8 up on the week, fuelled by the high level of corporate activity. Turnover was a lowly 655 million shares.

The rumour mongers were hard at work among the banks, with Barclays up 24p at £16.75 and NatWest Bank 36p better at 972.1p. This time they claim the two banks may merge their retail businesses once they have disposed of their respective investment banking arms. Barclays announced the sale of certain parts of BZW earlier this month, while NatWest Markets is known to have been up for sale for some time.

Another story suggested that Deutsche Bank might swoop on NatWest Markets before Chip Kruger, its new chief executive, can put forward a new strategy to revive the business.

Abbey National put on 24p at 990.1p, while the Royal Bank of Scotland was 14p better at 701p after linking up with Richard Branson's Virgin Direct. The group is meeting more than 50 fund managers on Tuesday.

There was further heavy turnover in British Telecom.



Shares in Coffee Republic perked up a further 5.1p

with ten million shares traded as the price firmed up to 472.1p. The City takes the view that BT is firmly in the driving seat, having brokered GTE's \$25 billion cash counter-bid for MCI. Brokers are confident that BT can negotiate a three-way deal with both GTE and MCI under which it still owns a 20 per cent stake. Elsewhere in

the telecom sector Vodafone added 6.1p to 364p amid further vague talk of a bid, while speculative buying pushed Orange 3.1p dearer to 254.1p and Securitor, which owns 40 per cent of Cellnet, 5.1p to 294.1p.

The possibility of a dividend cut left BAT Industries 11.1p down at 585p. Earlier this week, the group confirmed plans to merge its financial services arm with Zurich, creating a new company

quarter figures next week expected to show pre-tax profits up from £374 million to £395 million.

GEC mustered a rise of 8p to 416p, supported by positive comments from both Merrill Lynch and SBC Warburg. But LucasValecyl fell 7.1p to 218p after a profits downgrade from HSBC James Capel. The broker, Lehman Brothers is also taking a "neutral" stand.

Redland, the subject of a 320p a share offer earlier in

the week from Lafarge of France, slipped 1.1p to 342p. This is in spite of Goldman Sachs, the US securities house, putting a value of 417p on the business if an alternative bidder achieved cost savings of £30 million a year. Lafarge is only likely to be able to achieve cost savings of £16 million. On fundamentals, Redland is thought to be worth 325p a share.

There seems to be no stopping Coffee Republic, up another 5.1p at 33.1p. The price has risen from the 22p level during the past couple of days. That will come as good news to Jim Slater, the financier now turned share pundit, who is backing the business along with other members of his family.

No sooner had it completed the reverse takeover of Arion Properties earlier in the week, than it announced a link-up with French Connection to open a coffee bar concession. Medleys touched 26.1p before setting 2p better at 23.1p. The group has received the go-ahead from the US Food and Drug Administration to market NICHIBO, a system for disposing of hypodermic needles instantly.

Xaar enjoyed a modest premium in first-time trading after a placing of shares at 110p by Nomura and Greig Middleton. The computer printing specialist touched 117.1p before ending at 113.1p, a premium of 3.1p.

GIILT-EDGED: Bond prices lost ground in early trading, reflecting similar falls on other European markets. They rallied later in the session as investors began to review the prospect of Britain joining the first wave of a single currency. The best performers were seen in ultra-long and index-linked issues.

In futures, the December series of the long gilt put on a tick at £119.16 in brisk trading that saw a total of 109,000 contracts completed.

Treasury 3 per cent 2015 firmed £1.10 to £115.1p, while Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was down £1.10 at £103.1p.

NEW YORK: Wall Street was weaker at midday, hit by concerns over future earnings and a long bond worried about the economy being too strong. Several leading technology companies were

trounced after their latest results proved disappointing. At midday the Dow was down 63.61 points at 7,875.27.

Long Gilt
Previous open interest 189,546
German Govt Bond (Bund)
Previous open interest 32,825
Italian Govt Bond (BTP)
Previous open interest 114,007
Japanese Govt Bond (JGB)
Previous open interest 194,000

Three Mth Sterling
Previous open interest 48,000
Three Mth Eurodollar
Previous open interest 17,000
Three Mth Eurodollar
Previous open interest 47,000
Three Mth Eurodollar
Previous open interest 47,000

Three Mth Eurodollar
Previous open interest 17,000
Three Mth Eurodollar
Previous open interest 47,000
Three Mth Eurodollar
Previous open interest 47,000

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	7875.27 (-63.61)
S&P Composite	940.93 (-5.52)
Nikkei Average	17476.42 (+220.07)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	17476.42 (+220.07)
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	13601.01 (+33.75)
Amsterdam:	
ROE Index	904.59 (-7.42)
Sydney:	
ASX	2656.56 (-7.4)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	4061.50 (+36.23)
Singapore:	
SEAC	1827.39 (+23.15)
Brussels:	
General	1361.34 (+104.58)
Paris:	
CAC-40	2986.02 (+34.95)
Zurich:	
SIX	1227.01 (+5.4)
London:	
FT 100	5271.1 (-16.8)
FTSE 250	2656.56 (-7.4)
FTSE 350	2584.6 (-7.8)
FTSE 1000	2667.72 (-24.38)
FTSE All-Share	2660.19 (-7.38)
FTSE Non-Financials	2493.79 (-10.59)
FTSE Fixed Interest	132.56 (-0.22)
FTSE Govt 5y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 10y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 15y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 20y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 25y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 30y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 35y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 40y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 45y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 50y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 55y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 60y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 65y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 70y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 75y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 80y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 85y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 90y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 95y	100.11 (-0.2)
FTSE Govt 100y	100.11 (-0.2)

RECENT ISSUES

Aggreco	170	-1.5
Buckland Inv Wrs	170	-1.5
Buckland Inv Wrs	170	-1.5
Calsonic Demit IT	97.1	+1
Calsonic Demit IT	97.1	+1
Cambury Inv Wrs	21	+1
Cambury Inv Wrs	21	+1
Cambury Investments	21	+1
Creative Publishing	158	-
Creative Publishing	158	-
Lauchways (15%)	147.1	-
Lauchways (15%)	147.1	-
Metalsuisse	120	+13
Metalsuisse	120	+13
NSB Retail Sys	107.1	+3
NSB Retail Sys	107.1	+3
Northern Rock	497.1	-
Northern Rock	497.1	-
Nottingham Frs (70%)	63	-
Nottingham Frs (70%)	63	-
SHL Group	277.1	-1
SHL Group	277.1	-1
Solihull	140.1	+3
Solihull	140.1	+3
Xaar	113.1	-

RIGHTS ISSUES

Berkeley Gp n/p	125.1	-
Berkeley Gp n/p	125.1	-
Bonded Gp n/p (5)	40	-
Bonded Gp n/p (5)	40	-
Premier Asset n/p (1.8)	14	-
Premier Asset n/p (1.8)	14	-

MAJOR CHANGES

RISER:	
SDX Bus Sys	217.1p (+21p)
SDX Bus Sys	217.1p (+21p)
Sealed Air	335.1p (+20p)
Sealed Air	335.1p (+20p)
Highland Ltd	311.1p (+14p)
Highland Ltd	311.1p (+14p)
Utd Assurance	502.1p (+22p)
Utd Assurance	502.1p (+22p)
Headline	374.1p (+15p)
Headline	374.1p (+15p)
Card Gp	590.1p (+35p)
Card Gp	590.1p (+35p)
Hemline	258.1p (+10p)
Hemline	258.1p (+10p)
Nat West	972.1p (+35p)
Nat West	972.1p (+35p)
Abbey Natl	880.1p (+24p)
Abbey Natl	880.1p (+24p)
FALLS:	
Ti	631.1p (-38p)
Ti	631.1p (-38p)
Boat (Henry)	350.1p (-15p)
Boat (Henry)	350.1p (-15p)
BICC	200.1p (-8p)
BICC	200.1p (-8p)
Shield Diag	682.1p (-20p)
Shield Diag	682.1p (-20p)
Shell	457.1p (-10p)
Shell	457.1p (-10p)
Alred Wsh	537.1p (-11p)
Alred Wsh	537.1p (-11p)
BAT	585.1p (-11p)
BAT	585.1p (-11p)
Cable Wireless	540.1p (-10p)
Cable Wireless	540.1p (-10p)
Br Land	667.1p (-12p)
Br Land	667.1p (-12p)
Lloyds TSB	786.1p (-13p)
Lloyds TSB	786.1p (-13p)
Read Int	637.1p (-10p)
Read Int	637.1p (-10p)

Closing Prices Page 28

TEMPUS

Virgin territory

THE food retailers did not seek a petrol price war, but they got one. The new conflict on the horizon is a battle over market share in savings and loans and any investor heavily exposed to retail banks should consider a hasty retreat. Sainsbury's Bank will announce next week that its deposit account has secured almost £1 billion from nearly 500,000 customers. It is a mere drop in the ocean and Sainsbury's and Tesco cannot be earning margins of more than 50 basis points.

These advice banks need to balance their books with loan assets and that will take time. The opportunity lies in the low capital cost of setting up the new Virgin account. In Sainsbury's case, total losses of £20 million to £25 million are expected over two years from banking, of which Bank of Scotland, its partner, will absorb 45 per cent. An invest-

ment of £10 million to 12 million is chicken feed for Sainsbury, but it poses a big threat to Barclays and NatWest. On such a low capital base new banks can earn a good rate of return with quite slim interest margins. But Barclays, NatWest and Lloyds TSB will be ruthless. One leading stockbroker has calculated that a clearer would suffer a 40 per cent collapse in profits if it introduced the low rates offered by the new Virgin account.

Of course, Barclays and NatWest are not about to commit suicide and Royal Bank, which is backing Virgin, must be worried lest the Branson baby grows into a monster. With minuscule margins in corporate lending, the clearers depend on retail banking to support their fat 25 per cent equity return. They cannot afford to fight the new world, but the alternative is death by a thousand cuts.

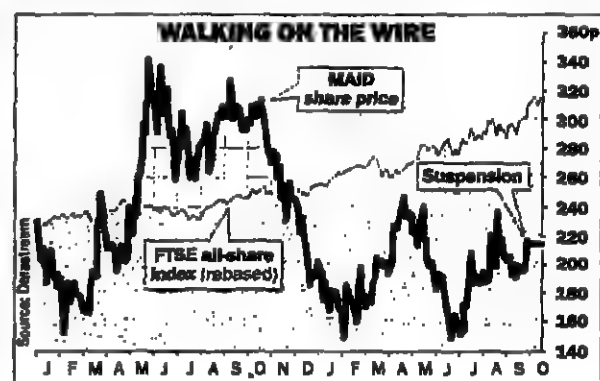
MAID

ALTHOUGH dwarfed by the big-bucks telecom and insurance deals, MAID's merger with Knight-Ridder is probably the most audacious bid the City will see this year. Dan Wagner has convinced bankers who have been in business longer than he has been alive to lend £170 million to a company with £10 million of assets. Wagner is betting that MAID's technology will succeed in turning around loss-making Knight-Ridder. If he fails, it will end in disaster.

Hence the intense interest in yesterday's trading update. MAID's reputation is built on strong growth, month-on-month. For the first time in years, MAID has failed to deliver. The company blamed the merger - subscribers are waiting to see the result before signing

up. The City seemed confident enough to invest £120 million in new MAID shares and analysts are enthused about the merged company's prospects. They expect that a combination of Knight-Ridder's database and MAID's technology will wipe the floor with rival Lexis-Nexis, whose old systems are less user-friendly.

But in the mean time, Mr Wagner has all to prove. With so much debt, the company has no room for manoeuvre and yesterday's caution shows how the task is not too far from reality. When the City's adulation will doubtless sweep them to 250p or more. That leaves no room for setbacks.



Pubs

MICHAEL CANNON has made a lot of money running pubs. Three years after pocketing £26 million from the sale of Devonish to Greenalls, he netted £70 million from the sale of the Magic Pub Company to Greene King.

It was just a matter of time before he'd start all over again, and sure enough he has emerged as backer of Sirenia, a new company fronted by two former Magic Pub colleagues and which is ominously headed for an AIM flotation.

Cannon, Johnson and Bruce have taken a knock for turning brands into money, and it seems inevitable that a new brand will soon appear on the 31 pubs Sirenia is buying from Grosvenor Inns and Regent Inns.

However, yesterday's disposals show it is sometimes easy to get it wrong. In Regent's case, it was a case of branding pubs that were too

small, and too few in number, to make it worthwhile. The ten pubs it is selling to Sirenia took about £60,000 a week compared with £240,000 for the rest of its estate. Trimming the portfolio at this juncture is a wise move but Sirenia will need clever marketing to overcome consumer fatigue over pubs with funny names.

FTSE actuaries

FOR political sensitivity, few jobs match those of the FTSE actuaries, who can consign a company to a financial living death by classifying its business in, for example, the lowly rated engineering sector instead of highly fashionable support services. That, at least is what many chief executives believe, preferring to blame their share ratings on a label, such as diversified industrials, rather than a record of weak profits.

The FTSE actuaries are shuffling some of their categories, shifting telecoms from

the utilities group and into services, a move that no doubt reflects the ambitions of BT's Sir Peter Bonfield. BT will leave behind dull bedfellows like gas and electricity to join happening media, leisure and restaurants. In the light of recent events, some investors may regret losing whatever caution the dull utility tag may have imposed on BT but the really important distinctions between companies tend to be ignored by the FTSE actuaries.

By far the commonest similarity between gas, electricity and water is the close economic regulation of these industries, a condition that drives away share prices more than any other consideration. A sector comprising industries whose revenue is subject to price control is surely more appropriate than utilities and would include a company such as Railtrack, whose fortunes are more linked to politics than transport.

EDITED BY CARL MORTSHED

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NEWS

Brown rules over single currency

■ Gordon Brown is on the verge of ruling out British membership of a European single currency before the next general election. The Chancellor will, as expected, announce over the next few weeks that Britain will not join the first wave of monetary union on January 1, 1999. But he will act to protect the economy from speculation about long-term intentions... Page 1

Branson takes on big banks

■ Richard Branson's Virgin empire, which already spans an airline, cinema networks, soft drinks, record stores and financial services, has launched a banking operation in direct competition with the biggest names on the high street. It is his most daring venture to date... Page 1

Muted Paris fashion

It was billed as a play in six acts, but the Chanel show was one of the least dramatic presentations of Paris fashion week... Pages 1, 5

GCSE fails test

Ampleforth College, the school regarded as the Roman Catholic Eton, has scrapped English Literature GCSEs because the examination is too easy... Page 3

Confession delayed

A care worker whose new Christianity led him to confess to sex crimes was told by police to return later if he still wished to... Page 5

Gift for Queen

The Queen reached across India's caste system to accept a gift from an Untouchable as a royal statement failed to heal political divisions over her visit... Page 7

Charm offensive

Any British hooligan disrupting the 1998 World Cup in France faces Dominique Spinosi... Page 9

Modern martyrs find their niche

■ Statues of ten modern saints and martyrs are to be placed in niches in Westminster Abbey, arousing criticism that none is English. They include Martin Luther King and Oscar Romero. San Salvador's murdered Catholic Archbishop... Page 1

Cancer test

A test for a male cancer is being adapted for use as the first screening test for breast cancer not requiring an X-ray... Page 13

Falklands plea

President Clinton said during his Argentina visit that "two great nations" like Britain and Argentina should renew negotiations over the Falkland Islands... Page 14

Parties are over

Over the past 25 years Sally Quinn has watched the steady decline of the Washington hostess... Page 15

Death row Briton

After nearly ten years on Death row for two murders Krishna Maharaj, a Briton, maintains his innocence... Page 17

Fayed sale

A secluded beachfront Malibu mansion owned by Dodi Fayed is for sale for about \$10 million (£6.2 million)... Page 18



Karl Brenner and Richard McDonough, who may be Britain's last slapstick clowns, at Chessington World of Adventures yesterday Page 3

NEWS FEATURES

Valerie Grove: Here sits Helen

Osborne, surrounded by her legacy from John: lovely old house, three dogs, Welsh pony, 30 acres of wooded hillside, and a smattering of anger... Page 21

Simon Freeman: It did not

take long for George Smith, veteran detective, to decide that the cowed figure demanding sanctuary was irredeemably bad... Page 19

Roger Boyes: A German

researcher, aided by a detective and a vet, has unmasked the court painter of King Charles I as a secret supporter of Cromwell... Page 10

OPINION

Clarity at last: Tony Blair

and his Chancellor have finally reached their decision on EMU. They will not join in 1999 nor, more important, will they enter in the lifetime of this Parliament... Page 23

Oil and troubled waters:

Argentina needs to continue a policy of reconciliation and outreach to the Falkland Islands... Page 23

LETTERS

Threat to pub heritage; royal visit; best opening lines; Burrell's gift to Glasgow; BBC interviewers... Page 23

COLUMNS

John Lloyd: Impatient of the

new national spirit of sobriety which was supposed to have banished prurience since the death of Diana, the press found three tales of private misfortune... Page 22

Lord Irvine: We promised a

wide-ranging review of civil justice and legal aid. We want reform to bring the system under control... Page 22

James Michener, novelist;

Leonard Evans, stained glass window creator; Gumpel Yoko, inventor... Page 25

Global fight: The battle for

global domination among accountants will become more intense if KPMG and Ernst & Young announce merger talks... Page 27

Barclays strike: Unions

claimed that the first of two 24-hour strikes at Barclays Bank caused widespread disruption... Page 27

Markets: The FT-SE 100

index fell 16.8 points to close at 5271.1. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose from 99.8 to 100.5 after a fall from \$1.6208 to \$1.6158 but a rise from DM2.8267 to DM2.8579... Page 38

Football: Gerry Francis,

the Spurs manager, said he had no intention of quitting despite his side's indifferent form... Page 33

Rugby union: Phil de

Glanville, the England captain, said he would pick Lawrence Dallaglio to lead the national side... Page 40

Golf: England lost 2-1

to Argentina in the Alford Dumbell Cup. Scotland beat Ireland... Page 34

Atheism: Paul Evans says

Britain is running short of atheism talent... Page 41

MAGAZINE

Natural selection: Cameron Diaz... Page 10
Degree of terror: Student's double life... Page 16
Bessie instinct: Women and the apes... Page 25

WEEKEND

Ready, go: Eddie Izzard in New York... Page 6
Close-up: An afternoon with Liza Walker... Page 10
Beats... Pages 16-23

WEEKEND MONEY

Living issue investment: A complete guide from childhood to retirement and the next generation... Page 33

Vision

7-day TV & Radio guide

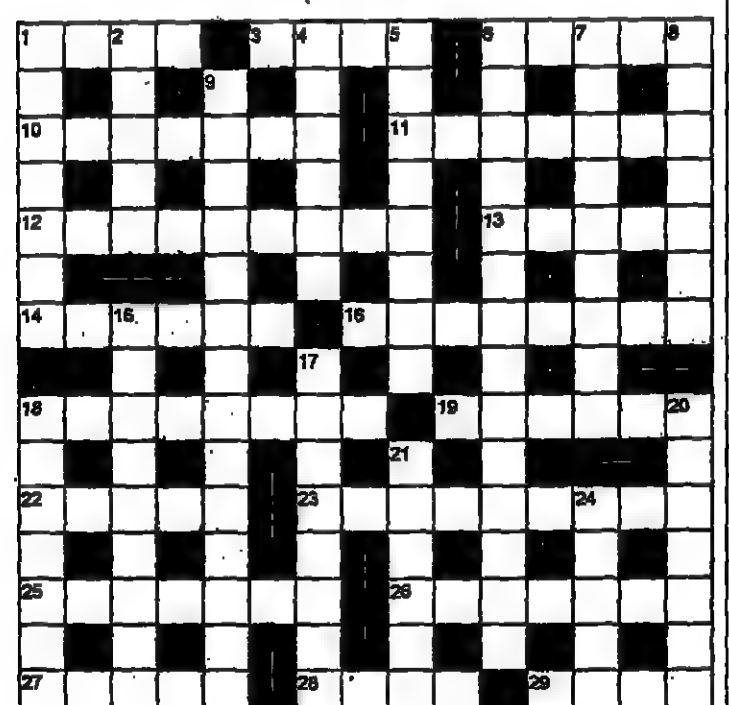
10 15

For younger readers of The Times

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,614

A £20 book token will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The names of the winners and the solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address



- ACROSS
- 1 Letterographer wanting son to become artist (4).
 - 2 Strain and stiffness of neck when head is displaced (4).
 - 3 Article holding extra in return? (3-2).
 - 4 City Road has one in informal coffee house (7).
 - 5 Hustler, corruptly, being extremely rich (7).
 - 6 Medical crisis is curtailed by drug coming to light (9).
 - 7 Position for bronze heads of two horses in Rodin's design (5).
 - 8 Walk casually, for example, around tree (6).
 - 9 Contemptuously putting out Silt-on with last of Derby (8).
 - 10 Say, Braburn's fifth, turning out a fatter (8).
 - 11 Meat's inside, following onset of downpour (6).
 - 12 Reptile cast part of lower body (5).
 - 13 They're such as Coleridge - Keats and Poe left out? (4-5).
 - 14 Passively accompany nameless Filipino (7).
 - 15 Plant strike vindicating labour (5,2).
 - 16 City worker raised capital in Pounds to be invested in Yens (5).
 - 17 Sweet and sour? (4).
- DOWN
- 1 Judge ordered steak with cold potato skins (7).
 - 2 Herod massacred large number (5).
 - 3 Child's Into Fantasia? Not half, not half (9).
 - 4 Know about family heading New York's Irish community (8).
 - 5 Fool injecting fix with drug takes they're only interested in quick profit (5-9).
 - 6 The German painter's an expert on greens? (9).
 - 7 See about daughter after weight goes up in conspicuous way (7).
 - 8 I play big choral composition - as The Childhood of Christ might be described (14).
 - 9 Informed after adding recapitulation (7-2).
 - 10 Damaged fin on fire during plane trip (5-6).
 - 11 Virtuous - isn't commonly caught in showing hypocrisy (7).
 - 12 Source of valuable stone put in list (7).
 - 13 Pin as bishop moves, covering ground (6).
 - 14 Magistrate raising lash hard-heartedly (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,608

Solution to Puzzle No 20,613

LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: D Dixon, Watlington, Oxon. R F North, Southampton; R Mitchell, Inch, Aberdeenshire; S Harrigan, Birmingham; R D H Almsworth, Bishops Cleeve, Herefordshire.

AA INFORMATION

Latest Road and Weather conditions

UK Weather - All regions 0336 444 410
UK Roads - All regions 0336 401 410
Roads 123 0336 401 744
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UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT

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THE TIMES SATURDAY SPORT

OCTOBER 18 1997

MANAGER PRESCRIBES STRONG MEDICINE

Defiant Francis takes the strain

BY MAIT DICKINSON

TOLD to stay at home by his doctor because of a chronic back strain, Gerry Francis drove himself to work yesterday. Ordered to walk with the support of crutches, the Tottenham Hotspur manager hobbled unaided, and in obvious pain, to take charge of his team's training session. For the growing season of Tottenham supporters hoping that their troubled manager will jump before they can push him, the message was clear: Francis is in defiant mood.

Set in his small office at the club's new Chigwell training ground, he maintained his resolution under fire from a gang of inquisitors. As building work went on around him, the Tottenham manager, under mounting pressure as his side face fellow FA Cup Premier League strugglers Sheffield Wednesday in the glare of Sky's television cameras tomorrow, manned the barricades.

When the inevitable question came, Francis did not flinch. "I am not the quining type," he said. "I certainly could be in a better situation and I've had better times over 30 years in the game. But there are lots of pressures in life people trying to get a job, paying bills."

"If you are a football manager, you go into it with your eyes open. You come in under pressure from day one, whether you are at the top or the bottom. I was captain of England at the age of 23, on

top of the world. The next I was out of the game for two years with a back injury. When you see the good times you have to keep yourself on an even keel and the same when it goes bad."

"Things can change very quickly, particularly with three points for a win. We are actually only five points from being in the top six — that's less than two wins."

How he needs the first of them to beat White Hart Lane tomorrow, against a Wednesday team that is in an even worse predicament. Anything less will bring increasing calls for his dismissal from supporters unwilling to tolerate a paltry return of six goals from ten Premier League fixtures so far this season.

Knowing that it has become a well-worn refrain, Francis bests before reeling off the injuries to Les Ferdinand, Chris Armstrong, Darren Anderton and Steven Iversen that have undoubtedly undermined his team's campaign. Few clubs could thrive in the absence of so many strikers, but that explanation has not been enough to satisfy everyone at White Hart Lane.

The lack of a driving force in midfield remains a glaring weakness, and the hoped-for return of Paul Gascoigne from Rangers appears to have hit a stumbling block because of the England international's wage demands, as well as Aston Villa's interest.

Francis seems likely to have



Comic cut-outs: Francis enjoys some light relief on the practice ground yesterday under the watchful eyes of some training aids and Martin Tyler, the Sky television commentator

to battle through his problems with the squad presently at his disposal, and he gave warning that it might not be a pretty sight at the club that inspired the glory game.

Ridiculed in one newspaper this week for his dour demeanour, his side are likely to display a similarly gritty approach, despite the flair of David Ginola and José Domínguez.

"It is not a question of playing well or poorly, we just

need to do whatever it takes to win the game and turn things around," he said. "Everybody is entitled to their opinion, but we have to make sure we just concentrate on winning and put what we read about or hear to the back of our minds."

"Certainly for three seasons until now, the fans have been very, very good. They still come in their droves and we have not had any problem filling the stadium since I came here. We've got to do

better and hope they stay behind the team."

"Frustration sets in, we all get frustrated. The last two home games we had plenty of chances to win and that frustration does get through to the supporters. But this club has not done well for a long, long time — 36 years in the league, in terms of winning it — so it is not just a question of this year, last year or the one before."

With no obvious candidates easily available, despite

reported interest in Bobby Robson, the Barcelona director of football, the Tottenham board is unlikely to make rash decisions, even if the club does plunge below its present ranking of fourteenth in the Premiership. Francis, who is into the last 12 months of his contract, made it plain yesterday that he will not walk.

Eternal problem, page 36
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Keegan maintains forward line

New move, same direction, for football's eternal frontman

If Kevin Keegan were a politician, his inspirational slogan would be one of the oldest and most revered. "Forward!" it would exhort us, while stirring music played behind. "Forward with Kevin Keegan!" Watching Keegan address and entertain 700 admirers at Westminster Central Hall in London on Thursday night at a Times/Dillons forum to mark the launch of his autobiography, I fell completely under the spell of this man, but not without noticing how (directionally speaking) things sort of fall into place with him, both in his personality and in football.

"It's a natural instinct in a footballer to go forward," he said at one point, a bit choked up at the thought of his former coaching philosophy. And it certainly seems that whatever he's doing, he doesn't go back, he doesn't look back, and, indeed, doesn't even glance sideways when a strange woman from The Times is

sitting beside him with a soppy expression of unconditional worship. "Does this forward-looking attitude really go with writing an autobiography?" I ventured, without wishing to be provocative. And luckily he agreed, very lucidly, that this exercise in enforced remembering had actually been quite hard.

All week, people had been reading me provocative questions for Keegan, but I somehow didn't want to provoke him. It's bad manners to antagonise a guest, and besides, when he's obliged to take a defensive position, he's famously bad at it and gets worked up. Hence his habit of leaving clubs by helicopter and never revisiting them, of neglecting defensive strategy, of rating David Ginola very, very highly. "I demonstrated, gesturing approvingly, 'He only wants to go that way when it's the second half.'"

Keegan told after-dinner anecdotes for half an hour, then answered unspoken questions from the floor, many from Newcastle United fans who had gathered to testify how much they missed him, and by implication how much he had hurt them by leaving. "I hope there are some Fulham supporters here as well,"



A funny thing at the forum: Keegan and a soppy Times woman share the spotlight

he said. A small, isolated cheer went up. "They're all here," came the automatic quip from the Geordies.

If occasionally it felt like intruding on someone else's encounter session ("I love you, son," "I love you, Dad," the rest of us didn't mind. Of

course, despite any number of promptings, Keegan will never apologise to Newcastle supporters for leaving them, grief-stricken, without a word; instead, he amazingly persuaded them on Thursday night that nothing had altered in their relationship. After all,

if he had spoken up last January, what would have been the result? "A riot," the fan admitted. "Exactly," Kevin said. "And how would that have helped the club?"

Everyone bought the book. Keegan signed for two solid hours, gossiping with every punter, posing for pictures and, at one point, even talking on a mobile phone to somebody's dad in hospital. "Do you remember blessing a baby?" I heard a large grey-haired man demand, bludily. Keegan managed to confess that he didn't. He signed the man's book with a good-luck message.

I wanted to see the end of the show, but at 11.30 I had to drive home, and Keegan was still on stage, still signing. In his book he vividly describes how, at Liverpool, Terry McDermott often reacted to being substituted by running off backwards "as if he was being reeled in like a fish." I like to imagine that's how Kevin Keegan finally left the empty hall, too, at midnight. Waving and receding, but always facing the front to the end.

Kevin Keegan My Autobiography (Little, Brown, £16.99).

Boston from £168 return



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England lose to Argentina in Dunhill Cup as Westwood falters

Els and Montgomerie clash again

By JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT

OF THE top golfers in the world, Colin Montgomerie and Ernie Els have competed against one another more than most. As if they have not seen enough of each other since midsummer 1994 in tournaments in the United States, Europe and Africa, they are to play again this morning when Scotland face South Africa to decide the outcome of group three in the Dunhill Cup at St Andrews.

"We've had our battles in the past," Els said with a rueful grin when the draw pinned two of the biggest and heaviest men in the entire competition against one another. "Monty is such a good player, one of the best in the world, and he is in a good mood this week. The Scottish spectators have been very good to us so far. It may be a little different tomorrow."

The draw was news to Montgomerie. "Are we?" he said with a look that was half a smile and half an expression of surprise when he was told he had to play Els. "That's delightful."

David Frost, the most senior member of South Africa's team, said: "On any given day, one can beat the other. Monty will win one day, Ernie the next. If I were to play Monty and the weather were to turn sour then he would have a big advantage because he would be considerably longer. They are both big and strong and both long. It's better that he and Ernie go at it."

They have gone at it quite often lately. The first occasion was a play-off for the 1994 US Open when Els defeated Montgomerie and Loren Roberts. Els beat Montgomerie by one stroke in the US Open this year, too. Montgomerie was beaten by Els in the final of the 1994 World Match Play Championship, as well as being outscored by the South African in the third round of the World Invitational at Loch Lomond in July. But Scots may prefer to remember what happened in the steamy heat of Bophuthatswana, South Africa, last December. Els was in the field, so was Montgomerie, and this time Montgomerie won.

The Scots, with Raymond Russell making his second appearance in this event, and Gordon Brand Jr continuing



Westwood attempts a recovery at the Road Hole, where he took six, which cost him his match. Photograph: Andrew Redington/Allsport

the remarkable form that has brought him more victories in this tournament than anyone except Greg Norman, have gelled well. Their victory over Ireland was their fifth in this competition, which as one Irishman suggested, is hardly how genial hosts should behave to their guests. Indeed, Ireland have never beaten Scotland in this competition.

It was one of those St Andrews days when the wind was swirling from the south to southwest and there was a steady clarity about the light out in St Andrews Bay. This meant that Carnoustie and the Angus coastline stood out across the water from the magnificent viewing eyrie of the New Club's dining room, and hats not firmly tethered were in danger of being blown off and sent bowling along the fairway. "It was not easy out there," Montgomerie

remarked. "There were not very many scores under par and the course was the winner today."

This was a more charitable comment than that made by Mark James after England had lost to Argentina. They must beat the United States 3-0 this morning to guarantee themselves a place in the semi-finals. James said, with feeling, that the complications of the tournament "paled into insignificance beside the difficulties of playing a course like this in these conditions."

"On a windy day such as today, when the greens are firm, there is nothing to stop a poor shot. And the undulations on the greens sweep the ball further and further from the hole."

James, one of 11 men who broke par, beat Eduardo Romero by one stroke. Earlier, Russell Claydon had lost to José Cereces by three strokes and then Lee Westwood made a hash of the 16th and 17th against Angel Cabrera. Having been three strokes ahead of Cabrera after ten holes and two ahead on the 16th tee, Westwood three-putted the

16th from long range after a poor second and then ran up a six on the penultimate hole. When his second finished on the path he probably would have given quite a lot for Padraig Harrington's stroke from the same place an hour or so earlier.

Harrington's deft pitch was hit into the top of the bank and he holed from ten feet for a par. Westwood's pitch, however, ran across the green from where he chipped back to ten feet and two-putted.

Not wanting to run any risks of wasting the precious one-stroke lead he now held, Cabrera, at the 18th, drove almost on to the first tee. From there he pitched close enough to get a birdie, which was matched by Westwood.

In fact, of the six men involved in this match, Claydon was the only one who did not birdie the final hole.

RESULTS FROM ST ANDREWS

GROUP ONE: United States 3 Japan 0	United States 3 Japan 0
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74

GROUP TWO: Sweden 3 France 0	Sweden 3 France 0
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74

GROUP THREE: Scotland 3 Ireland 1	Scotland 3 Ireland 1
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74

GROUP FOUR: New Zealand 3 South Korea 0	New Zealand 3 South Korea 0
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74
Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74	Claydon 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74, Els 74

Building society members count their blessings



Mason, who played his part in the West Bromwich Building Society's success, chips to the 12th on the Arden course yesterday

By MEL WEBB

THE Arden course at the Forest of Arden was at its fiercest best. The venue of the recent One 2 One British Masters, it was in no mood to yield points without a fight, and the winners of the West Midlands regional final of The Times Mess-Peron Corporate Golf Challenge had to battle all the way.

The event was won on 79 Stableford points by West Bromwich Building Society, from Scientific Glass Laboratories, who equalled their total but were forced to settle for second place after a comeback of the last nine holes. A comeback was also needed to resolve third place. Alun-Steve UK, leaving Ferraris Piston Services out of the prizes.

"It was difficult to see how we could possibly have done enough," Colin Campbell, one of the winning team, said. "We're obviously happy to be going to La Manga for the national final, but we're pretty surprised, too."

Campbell, playing with Andrew Messenger, chief executive of the



society, had a good start, playing the first five holes in level par, scoring 12 points in the process. His best hole of those five was the 3rd, where his drive hit casual water. He dropped 25 yards back, hit a pitching wedge 120 yards and took two putts from 30 feet to give himself a net birdie and three points.

Messenger made a slightly slower start, but had a net eagle on the 4th for three points, hitting a nine-iron bravely over trees to five feet. They kept up the good work on the tougher back nine and finished in the grand manner, Campbell getting pars on the last two holes, for four points.

The other two-ball, comprising

Roger Mason and John Inkley, started on the 10th and were a little downcast after they both hit long drives and then failed to score. With the course playing very long after recent rain, they were saved more than once by Inkley's wedge.

They scored only 11 points each on the back nine but improved dramatically when they hit the more open part of the course on the front half. The points that put them into the countback came on the 9th from Inkley, who chipped from the lip of the bunker and had one putt from three feet for a net par and two points. He could not have left it a moment later.

REMARKS: The West Bromwich Building Society, Scientific Glass Laboratories Ltd (West Bromwich Building Society won on countback), 77: Alun-Steve UK Ltd, Ferraris Piston Services Ltd (Alun-Steve UK won on countback), 78: Pylot French Foods Ltd 78: The Ferraris & Co Ltd, 79: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 80: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 81: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 82: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 83: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 84: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 85: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 86: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 87: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 88: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 89: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 90: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 91: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 92: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 93: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 94: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 95: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 96: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 97: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 98: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 99: Ferraris & Co Ltd, 100: Ferraris & Co Ltd.

SNOOKER

Hendry odd man out as old rivals battle on

By PHIL YATES

STEVE DAVIS, Stephen Hendry and Jimmy White, whose names dominate the Grand Prix trophy after combining to win the tournament nine times, have contrasting weekends. While Davis and White attempt to reach the last 16 of the season's first world ranking event in Bournemouth, Hendry has nothing better to do than practise.

Any Hendry defeat is unexpected, but Thursday's 5-3 reverse against Jamie Burnett registered particularly strongly. Burnett performed well but, on form, Hendry surely has his measure.

The Scot has failed to negotiate the first hurdle in all three tournament appearances this season and, inevitably, questions are being asked about

his commitment. However, Hendry's pride remains wounded. Clearly irritated by his lack of spark against Burnett, the world No 36, Hendry gave the overwhelming impression that he would return fiercely determined for his United Kingdom title defence in mid-November.

Davis and White, who have suffered more than most at the hands of Hendry, have more immediate concerns. Both have potentially tricky matches today. Willie Thorne, the second-round conqueror of Ken Doherty, provides the opposition for White, while Davis plays Dominic Dale, a fast-improving Welshman, who possesses the break-building credentials necessary to swell the list of upsets.

Canadian Power play sends Harris reeling

FROM COLIN MCCUTCHAN IN ALEXANDRIA

JONATHAN POWER, a 24-year-old Canadian with a flair for breakdancing and a wicked enjoyment in catching his squash opponents "with their pants down", reached the final of the Egyptian Open championships here with an incisive 15-9, 15-12, 15-3 win over Del Harris, the England No 3.

The victory suggested he could become the unexpected beneficiary of Jansher Khan's decision not to defend the World Open title in Kuala Lumpur next month, and some indication of the scale of such an ambition was due to be delivered late last night when Power was scheduled for another clash with the reigning world champion.

Jansher, speedy and concentrated, removed Peter Nicol, the Scottish left-hander, 15-8, 12-15, 15-11, 15-10 from the 71-minute second semi-final. Nicol had emerged victorious the last time they met on Egyptian soil, in the Al Ahram final last June, but Jansher

suggested yesterday that while Nicol was very promising, he was still in the learning process. Of Power, he said after beating him in the Hong Kong Open final in August: "He is a very good front-court player but I played him into the back where he is no good at all."

Contempt may be too strong a word for the appreciation the 28-year-old Pakistani shows for his pursuers. Amused tolerance might suffice. He says: "It doesn't matter who wins in Kuala Lumpur. I know in my heart I am still world champion and I will get the title back in India next year."

The British camp had hoped its semi-finalists might crack that superiority complex, but they failed even to crack the Canadian, whose victory over Harris was his fourth in a row. He also has three consecutive wins over Nicol. Nevertheless, the Scot declared himself generally happy with his form on the run-in to a main event.

Jackman in surprise title defeat

CASSIE JACKMAN, Britain's highest-seeded player in the women's world championship, was surprisingly beaten in the quarter-finals yesterday.

The No 3 seed lost 4-9, 9-6, 7-9, 9-0, 9-6 after a gruelling 90-minute encounter with the fifth-seeded Carol Owens, of Australia, at Homebush Sports Centre in Sydney.

Owens now plays her compatriot, Michelle Martin, in the semi-finals today. In her quarter-final, Martin, three times world champion and the No 2 seed, dropped the first game against Sabine Schöne, of Germany, before rallying to defeat the No 7 seed 1-9, 9-2, 9-5, 9-5.

The No 1 seed and defending champion, Sarah Fitz-Gerald, also of Australia, swept aside the No 8 seed, Suzanne Horner, of England, 9-3, 9-0, 9-4. Fitz-Gerald faces Sue Wright, of England, in the semi-finals. The final is tomorrow.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NFL) Kansas City 31 San Diego 3

BASKETBALL

PARIS: McDonald's Championship: Atlanta Celtics 87, Boston Celtics 81. 78: Boston Celtics 87, Atlanta Celtics 81.

BOWLS

PRESTON GUILD HALL: Bupa Cup: Homebush Open Championship: Quarter-final: J. Power (Wales) 10, R. Harris (Wales) 10. 78: Harris (Wales) 10, Power (Wales) 10.

CRICKET

SECOND TEST MATCH: Sri Lanka 100, Pakistan 100. 1st day of five: Pakistan v South Africa - no play rain.

FOOTBALL

WORLD CUP: Asian qualifying stage. Second round: Group A: Iran 4, China 1. 1st day: Iran 4, China 1. 1st day: Iran 4, China 1.

ICE HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL) Dallas 4 Florida 2. San Jose 2, New York Islanders 2.

POWERBOATING

WINDERMERE: Record attempts week. Class: R (unlimited horsepower). J. Nason (Wales) 1:10.00. 1st day: J. Nason (Wales) 1:10.00.

ITALIAN CUP: Third round, first leg: AC Milan 3, Fiorentina 2. Fiorentina 2, AC Milan 3.

FRENCH LEAGUE: Marseille 2, Metz 0. Clermont 1, Bordeaux 1.

SPANISH LEAGUE: Real Madrid 2, Barcelona 1. Valencia 1, Athletic 1.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Celtic 2, Rangers 1. Aberdeen 1, Dundee 1.

SCOTTISH CUP: Celtic 2, Rangers 1. Aberdeen 1, Dundee 1.

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FOR THE RECORD

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Under-38s

Knock-in cup - the real thing

Not since their notorious floating of "New Coke" can the good people of Coca-Cola have had so much public egg on their faces. Their poor old cup competition has become the tournament that died of shame, with clubs gladly going to jail rather than expose themselves to public ridicule by actually attempting to lift the thing.

The writing was on the wall for the contest - once nobly the League Cup - when, for a period, it was sponsored by The Milk Marketing Board and before every tie crowds were forced to stare at a giant bloated milk bottle that had to remain on the centre spot until literally seconds before kick-off.

Of course, had it been left throughout the game, it would have made a lot more sense and cheered everyone up, but they weren't clever enough to do that. So, always the idiot lightweight cousin to the Cup proper, the dairy council's cheesy involvement soon made it clear that here was something, in prestige, a few rungs beneath the regional domestic heats for the A Knockout.

So what of its future? Well, might I draw attention to something that has always struck me as a basic flaw in any cup competition and which these days, with many of our top professionals being driven to play four times in ten days, is simply crying out for swift and decisive action. And that is that we are, 800 years away from the millennium, and all our cup tournaments are still based on the outdated and discredited notion of the "knockout" principle.

Surely what we need today is the "knock-in" principle, where the winning side is allowed to withdraw quietly from the competition while the vanquished must slog on until they are forced to drag their weary bodies up Wembley Way for

DANNY BAKER



one last, exhausting stab at success. With the "knock-in" principle, if Man Utd draw Darlington in the third round, Alex Ferguson would have to field his strongest side of jantars, babes-in-arms and Shoot magazine competition winners that pitched up at Ipswich this week. Darlington might triumph and he'd still be saddled with the bloody thing.

I propose this radical modernisation only for our punishing domestic tournaments, though. The World Cup must continue with the old "knockout" system and its traditional losers-home-first policy. I say this for two reasons: one, you can't get enough of Brazil, and two, I am not yet prepared to see that glorious trophy being paraded around by the Scots, no matter how they come by it.



Celebration pints: Ray Houghton, Trevor Hebbard and Jeremy Charles after Oxford United's win in the 1986 Milk Cup final

Stuff it up the jumper

ATTENTION all who appreciate the game in its purest form. A caller to the radio show last week put this wonderful scenario to me that he claimed actually to have witnessed while sipping the match on Sunday in his local park. Here's the thing. A goalkeeper, on taking the ball from a poor cross, called one of his midfield players to him and appeared to be whispering some secret instructions. In fact he was pushing the ball up the shirt of his team-mate, who then ran, hell-

for-leather, towards the opposing goal. The ball was well-logged and he couldn't be tackled in any legal sense so, once in the opposition's area, he simply had to dodge their 'keeper' then, on crossing the line, pull his shirt up and drop the ball like an egg from a goose.

The goal was given. For the life of me I can't think why it shouldn't have been and why we don't see this tactic attempted at least once every game. True, Harpo Marx does something very similar at the end of *Horse Feathers*, but since Ernie Hunt's infamous flick-up free kick for Coventry City was declared foul play, coaches have been scared stiff to go out on a limb. So, is it safe? Clarification please.

ITV failed to feel the noise

THOSE of you who listened to the Italy v England game on the radio or watched it live via satellite will know how gripping, passionate and noisy an occasion it was. Those of you who viewed it on ITV at 10pm will probably wonder how so big an occasion could be so flat.

Throughout, the coverage seemed to be coming from inside an executive box. The entire ambient *sturm und drang*, brought across wildly and vividly on other sources, was so dampened down, mixed out and politely Dolbied to death that, beautifully balanced

though it probably was, the stadium atmosphere was made into little more than a sporting equivalent of lift music.

The muted unreality of the match was further set on by an untypically bloodless performance from Brian Moore, who, particularly during the first half, set a measured downbeat tone closer to a suffocating state occasion than the world's greatest game from Rome. "Ince... (long pause)... looking for Le Saux... (pause)... finds him. (Pause). Still an hour left on our watches..." Even Big Ron sounded at times

as though he was watching a tape of the match on a portable back at the hotel. Football commentators should always, always be fighting the noise of the assembled thousands. If there is none, then it ought to be artificially added as hoof-beats are in horse racing. Last Saturday a lot of people had an incredible theatre of the senses delivered into their homes with all the power and chaos of a Merchant-Ivory soundtrack. And this, from the same channel that brings us the off-the-scale-hyena reactions each week in *Blind Date*. Funny old medium.

Pleat with crocodiles

DURING a visit by my two-year-old niece, Amy, I was puzzled by her fascination with the TV punditry during a half-time break in the football. Not even the omnipresent Telenovelas on a set upstairs could rip her away from her position inches from the screen. When her mother eventually came into the room I quizzed her as to why her little girl

was gripped by the only part of the football coverage that has grown-up reaching for the Plo and Laa Laa videos. "Is David Pleat on?" she asked. "She likes him, she thinks he's Mr Punch." And so he is. With his ruddy cheeks, pointy chin, twinkling eyes and glowing nose that seemed to be firmly set on a journey southward, the excellent Pleat is the living spit of the famous seaside wife-beater and crocodile-chaser. All we need now for diverting half-time sessions is a Judy, a sausage-stealing dog and a police officer. I will volunteer to update the script.

IF YOU would like to pep up a dreary journey home after a game then you might like to try the following practical joke. On the morning of the match simply take a list of the day's fixtures and pencil next to them some extremely unlikely results. Then record your wild predictions on to a cassette in the most authoritative voice you can. That evening, as you leave the ground, produce a small tape player and turn it on. People will inevitably fall in step beside you to hear Newcastle lose 7-1 at Barnsley and Chelsea have been knocked out of the Cup, 1-0, by Bury. Then watch as they excitedly scurry off to spread this bogus pools check to others. Even on the bitterest nights the ride home is thoroughly warmed...

The Joe Keegle sensation

Leafing through Keegle's memoir of *A Life (Will There Ever Be A Rainbow?)*, Lippie and Notebook, £12.99, I am stopped in my browsing tracks by the startling revelation that Keegle is not Keegle at all. He is properly Joe. His real name is Joe Keegle. Has there been a bigger soccer sensation since Bob Wilson was unmasked as a "Primrose"? In the wider world of showbiz, of course, people routinely indulge in such shifting identification. Who

can ever forget the superb casual carter of conjurer Paul Daniels' former wife who, on being asked her opinion of Paul's new love, Debbie Maghee, offered: "She seems all right but what I find funny is the way she says 'Paul this' and 'Paul that'! Well he were Ted when I married him and he's still Ted as far as I can see..." Yes, that's the right approach. It will take more than the emergence of a long-lost "Joe" to shake the Keegle from our consciousness.

Sir makes light work of football

AFTER the launch last week of the competition to find Britain's most vicious and/or eccentric postwar games master (Grand Prize £100) I can bring you a report of certainly the most splendidly lazy one. Mr K. Griggs tells us of a Mr Naylor who, while always vague as to what he expected of the boys during PE, would surpass himself when the skies turned dark.

When it rained on school match days, Mr Naylor would simply refuse to get out of his car and, driving on to the heath, would park at the halfway line and referee the match by flashing his lights whenever he saw an infringement. On seeing the quick, full-beam blast, the dripping, bedraggled boys would be required to trot across to his Austin A40 and wait as he wound down his windows to deliver a curt "Offside" or "Handball" before winding it back up again. Mr Griggs recalls that, on one occasion, an attack was halted in error when it turned out that Mr Naylor was trying to return his radio. Any more information on this admirable official or similar colleagues, please send care of this column.

□ Danny Baker is on Talk Radio (1053-1069 MW) every Saturday from 5.30pm.

Money talks as the Marlins achieve early breakthrough

FROM KEITH BLACKMORE IN MIAMI

ODDEN with champagne, even Brown, the winning pitcher for the Florida Marlins, stepped out of the riotous celebrations deep in the bowels of Turner Field in Atlanta and let emotion get the better of him. "They talk about the money we spent, say that we ought a championship," he said. "No. This was all about heart."

Brown's elation was understandable. His team had just beaten their arch-rivals, the Atlanta Braves, to the National League championship and qualified to play the winners of the American League pennant, the Cleveland Indians, in the best-of-seven-game World Series, which begins here tonight. But he was wrong about the money. Actually, his team's victory was all about money.

The Braves had learnt the hard way that when money talks, he who spends most talks the loudest. In 1991, when the Braves began a run of success that has brought them four National League championships and a World Series triumph and earned them the unofficial but barely disputed title of "team of the



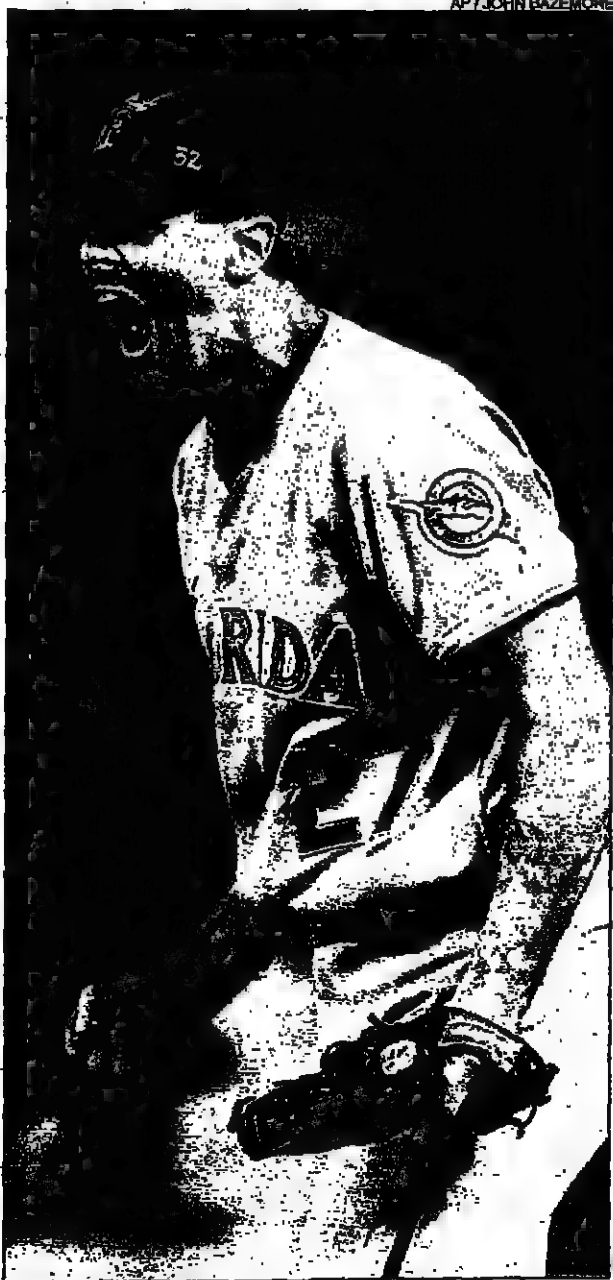
face of it, the Marlins are the lesser team but they can point to their eight wins in 12 meetings between them.

But their instant success has implications far beyond their divisional rivalry with the Braves. The language of business had become increasingly appropriate to baseball (reversing a trend that sent terms like strike-out and home run the other way). Clubs are known as franchises now and the Florida Marlins form a franchise *par excellence*.

When the major league clubs decided to expand the league in 1993, Florida, which at that time had no baseball teams, seemed rich in potential and an obvious target for a man such as H. Wayne Huizenga.

Brash and colourful, Huizenga, also the owner of Miami's glamorous National Football League franchise, the Dolphins, and the surprisingly successful young National Hockey League club, the Miami Hurricanes, made his first fortune in garbage disposal and his second with the Blockbuster Video empire. He applied the approach that had been so successful elsewhere to his sports interests: more, bigger, better.

After three mediocre but by no means unusually bad years for a fledgling club, Huizenga decided to accelerate the process of creating a championship baseball team. Last summer he went on a spending spree the like of which had never been seen before, signing up a host of the game's best players. Hitting stars such as Bobby Bonilla and Moises Alou and the pitcher, Alex Fernandez, were among a handful of players who joined the Marlins on contracts that will be worth almost \$90 million (about £57 million) over three years.



Brown, the Marlins' starting pitcher, roars in triumph

But there was method in his madness, too. He spent another \$7.5 million on a three-year contract for Jim Leyland, one of the most skillful managers in baseball. Leyland had worked wonders for the Pittsburgh Pirates, a team rich in tradition but poor in dollars. This season, the Pirates had a total team payroll of about \$13 million. By contrast, Gary Sheffield, perhaps the most gifted player in Leyland's new team, was paid more than \$10 million for his year's work.

With such talent at his disposal, Leyland has unsurprisingly done the trick. But there's the rub. Success on the field has not brought success off it. Even with the signing of

Cuban players with their appeal to the huge Cuban community in Miami, Pro Player Stadium has only occasionally been filled to its 65,000 capacity. Halfway through the season, with the Marlins well positioned, Huizenga announced that they were losing him \$30 million a year and put the franchise up for sale.

There have been no takers, the payroll (\$54 million this year alone) no doubt being something of a deterrent. And the team's grand finale may yet change his mind. "I'm having fun here," he said. "We might have to think that thing [the sale] through later."

Maybe. Maybe not. Business is business, after all.

BOWLS: QUALIFIER REACHES SEMI-FINALS WITH IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY

Nervous Gillett rises from the ranks

BY DAVID REYS JONES

LES GILLETT, a 26-year-old left-hander, struck a blow for grass-roots bowlers, when he defeated the holder and No 1 seed, Hugh Duff, 7-2, 7-2, 7-5, in the quarter-finals of the Bupa Care Homes Open at Preston Guild Hall yesterday.

Gillett, who plays for Banbury, joined the Professional Bowls Association (PBA) in July, just after making his first appearance for England in the home international series at Worthing.

The PBA had just announced that it would be holding a qualifying event at Blackpool in September, with four places in the Open on offer.

A motley crew turned up for the play-offs, including a ten-year-old boy, a competitor in a wheelchair and a handful of women bowlers, but Gillett,

from Gloucestershire, came through a strong field, beating David Corkill, a favourite with the Guild Hall crowds, on his way to Preston.

On Sunday, he ousted the No 8 seed, Ian Schuback, but he was fortunate to get past Nigel Williams, of Swansea, another PBA qualifier, in the second round, after a lacklustre display.

Yesterday, he admitted to being nervous, but the respect for Duff inspired him and he produced one of the most impressive performances of the championships.

Gillett will meet John Price, of Swansea, who defeated Richard Corrie on Thursday night, in the semi-finals.

David Gillett misfired with his second delivery against Steve Glasson, of Australia, when he caught his finger on the carpet, and sent his bowl halfway up the rink.

"That played on my mind for a while," Gourlay said. "I was one set down before I really settled, but, once I found my rhythm, I was quite happy."

An exciting match was not decided until the last. Gourlay, 5-3 ahead, tried unsuccessfully to ditch the jack with his opening delivery. Going back to the drawing board, the Scot set up a match lie with a handy jack-high bowl, then watched as Glasson twice tried to collect the jack with drives.

The Australian's first effort

went through a gap that did not look wide enough to accommodate a bowl, and his second missed the jack by a millimetre on the other side, leaving Gourlay the victor, 4-7, 7-2, 7-5, 5-7, 7-5.

"You've got to be accurate at this level," Glasson said. "A near miss just isn't good enough."

This was revenge for Gourlay. Glasson, a former rugby league player, won the Mazda Jack High championship in Australia earlier this year, beating Gourlay on the way.

SAILING

Skipper's son loses tip of his finger

BY MALCOLM MCKEAG

CAMPBELL FIELD, son of the skipper of America's Challenge, has sustained a painful but not uncommon injury in the Whitbread Round the World Race, losing the tip of the index finger of his right hand.

In a fitful breeze and lumpy night sea, the 27-year-old son of Ross Field was pushing out the mainboom when the finger became trapped in the mainsheet block.

Field Sr, who skippered *Yamaha* to her win in this race four years ago, reported to race HQ that his son had lost between five millimetres and ten millimetres from the end of his finger. "Campbell is now resting in his bunk. He's all right, but is suffering a bit of shock," his father reported.

In the world of big-boat racing, losing the tip of an extremity is not an unusual injury, where sheets and wires carry loads of many tonnes round unshrouded winches and through unguarded pulley blocks. To these regular hazards, the *Whitbread* brings the added danger of frostbite in the Southern Ocean.

Aboard *America's Challenge*, which, coincidentally also lost a place during the night, to Chris Dickson's *Toshiba*, the skipper is making light of his son's injury.

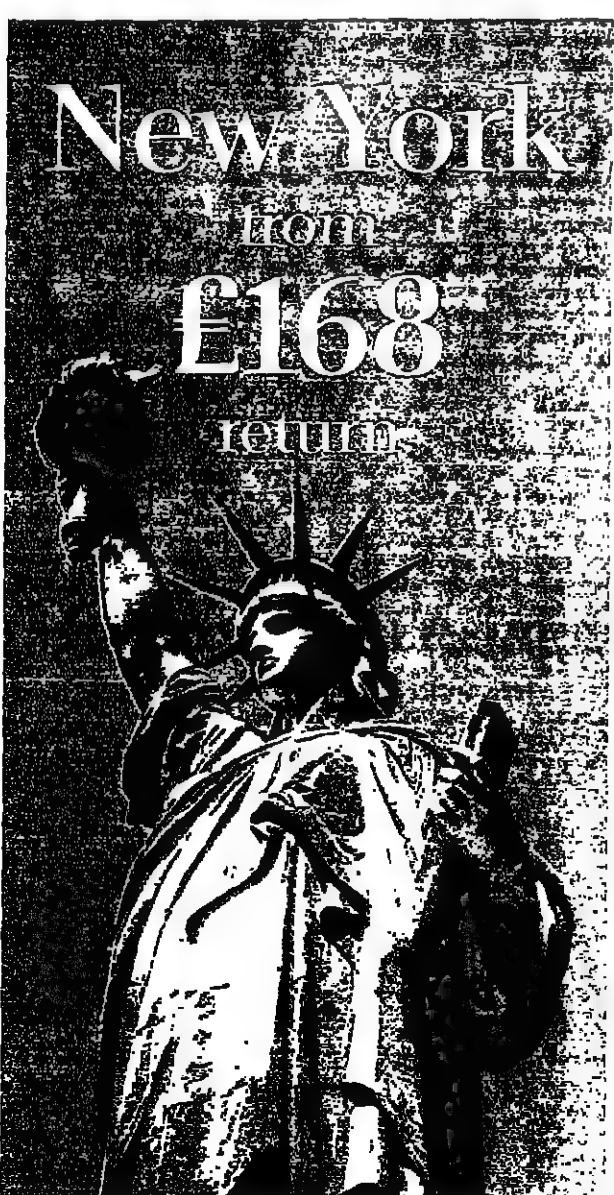
completing that Field Jr may not now be able to work the boat's video camera.

Paul Cayard's *EF Langue* leads by more than 100 miles, with a continuing close race for second between *Merit Cup* and *Innovation* Kvaerner. Lawrie Smith, in the British entry, *Silk Cut*, is fourth, more than 400 miles behind the leader.

In Algarrobo, Chile, Ben Ainslie and Hugh Styles, of Britain, jointly hold fifth place in the Laser world championship, which started on Thursday. They are one point behind the gold medal-holder, Robert Scheidt, of Brazil. Nick Burford, the 1994 world champion, from New Zealand, leads.

In the two-handed Transatlantic race, Pete Goss and Raphael Dinelli are in fourth position, 80 miles behind the leader, *Aquitaine Innovation*. More than 400 people attended a memorial service in Leicester Cathedral yesterday for John Merricks, who was killed in a car crash in Italy last week. The lesson was read by Ian Walker, Merricks's sailing partner, who with him won the silver medal in the 470 class in Savannah in the 1996 Olympic Games.

Race positions, page 34



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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Mark Hodgkinson finds a chairman who is often too stressed to enjoy his team's exploits except, of course, when they win

The request seems reasonable enough. "Bugger off," John Dennis, the chairman of Barnsley and a wholesale greengrocer, snaps. He does not want to share his working day with anyone, especially a journalist, thank you very much. He offers a compromise: "You can have an hour. I'll see you at three o'clock at the club," he says. Would he like a phone call on the day to remind him? He is affronted: "No, I'll be there."

At 2.55pm he drives his smart Audi into the club car park and walks nonchalantly towards the reception area, a burly figure in a black overcoat. His skin is doughy, he seldom smiles; there is something of the undertaker about his demeanour. Some Barnsley supporters are queuing for tickets at the box office. He passes by unnoticed.

He is already more than ten hours into a working day that starts at 4.30am, when produce arrives at his company headquarters in Pontefract Road, Barnsley. It is then distributed by a staff of about a hundred to shops and markets in a sixty-mile radius. "I don't know how he does it," Danny Wilson, Barnsley's manager, said, commenting on his chairman's stamina.

"I'm overweight, stressed, I smoke too much and I like the odd tittle," Dennis said. He also swears a good deal more than your average club chairman. He is public school educated, but has spent all his life in Barnsley, a town that does not

Where watching a game is agony

LIFE
AT THE
TOP



stand on ceremony. "John is very down to earth. He cares passionately about the club and has a real affinity with the town," an insider said. "He will stand his corner, but sometimes takes a bad result too much to heart. He has a really bad weekend if we lose."

Within the game, Dennis is known for his self-assurance and a certain brusque charm. He accepts praise with the same scepticism he holds for reproach. He is a Yorkshireman, which is, by common definition, a warm heart beating in an icy exterior. Wilson has often spoke of his fondness. "That's because I'm a soft touch!" Dennis jokes.

Dennis has had to temper his natural ebullience. A few years ago he found himself in a fury outside the dressing-room of a referee who had sent off a Barnsley player. "I was seething and went down to give the ref a volley," he

said. "When he opened the door to me I thought, 'You prat, what are you going to do now?' It was a pointless way to achieve anything and I realise then that I would have to go about things in a different way."

The qualities that have taken Barnsley to the FA Carling Premiership are distilled in Dennis. He is a pragmatist, hard working and loyal, quietly charismatic, organised and unwilling to accept a natural order that would see Barnsley down among the dead men of English football. He will take his place in the VIP seats at Old Trafford next Saturday when Barnsley visit the

champions. "We're in this division because our results say we are good enough to be here," he said. So there. He inherited his love of the club from his father, Ernest, the club chairman from 1967 until his death in July 1979. The first game that John attended at



Dennis reflects on the privilege of being the chairman of Barnsley

Oakwell was a 2-0 defeat against Derby County in the 1958-59 season, a precursor to relegation that season; his was to be a lowly tested frequently. "I've given up trying to explain why I support Barnsley. It is just something that gets under your skin," he said.

Unlike most football chairmen,

Dennis does not own any shares and has no financial interest. This has forged a kinship with the fans since he is still the same as them, albeit with an executive role. "I have always believed it is a privilege to be a chairman of Barnsley FC," he said.

These days, he has invested so much

time and emotion into Barnsley that the simple pleasure of watching them play is denied. "Watching the games is agony. Ninety minutes are very stressful. I only relax when we've won," he said. A comfortable lead does not alleviate the tension and he recalls — in gruesomely vivid detail — two games where three-goal leads were squandered. "I suppose if we were 8-0 up with 15 minutes left I might relax a bit," he said.

It is most important decision was to appoint Wilson as manager in the summer of 1994. Wilson had been assistant to Viv Anderson, who left to join Middlesbrough. The supporters wanted new blood and were not appeased by Wilson's promotion. "He was always the obvious choice for me. He has an excellent reputation and is determined. He is full of character and has a deep knowledge of the game," Dennis said.

The appointment paid off handsomely because, on Saturday, April 26 of this year, Barnsley secured promotion to the top flight with a 2-0 win against Bradford City. Amid the euphoria, there was a private, tender moment for Dennis, Eric Steele, a former Barnsley manager, passed in the stand and noticed an expression that he read immediately. "I know who you are thinking about," he said. John Dennis was thinking of his father and a dream realised.

Danger of ignoring history

England's match in Rome saw an eternal problem surface again

BRIAN GLANVILLE



"Sport," wrote George Orwell, in 1945, "is an unending cause of ill will." Recent events in Rome support him. The viciousness of England's hooligan fans, the biased excesses of the Italian police, the frightening experiences of those docile English fans who simply wanted to watch a football match, made up a fearful scenario.

Accusations fly back and forth between Rome and London. The Football Association is to investigate, of course. A 24-year-old Italian, struck by a bottle, has lost an eye. An English fan has lost a Gucci belt. In that contrast alone, perhaps we can begin to see things more clearly. There are, alas, certain constants. A veteran of the terraces, who in his Oxford days travelled regularly, though peacefully, with Manchester United's notorious Cockney Reds, and now frequents Millwall, put it to me cogently enough: "The Italian police were disgraceful. English police would never have gone in with batons like that. They would have sorted it all



Happy supporters in full voice as they urge on England during the goalless World Cup game with Italy in Rome. Photograph: Neil Munn

out in no time. But what did all those middle-class Hornbys think they were getting into anyway, with their Gucci belts and families? In Italy, it has always been like that. Liverpool fans were attacked outside the Olimpico after Roma had been beaten in the European Cup final. Manchester United fans have been assaulted in Turin by Juventus hooligans. Quite so; but let us ask this. How is it that, when Juventus played Ajax in the 1996 final of the European Cup at the Olimpico, and Rome swarmed with Dutch and Italian fans, all was

tranquil, even though both clubs have their lunatic fringe following? Why is it that, in places as far apart as Stuttgart, Rome and New York, the Irish fans behave with endearing good humour, singing, celebrating, but never fighting, despite their nation's reputation for pugnacity? The answer is that when England play abroad, hooligan fans converge from all parts of the country. They may numerically be a minority, but they are a substantial one, brutal and brutalised, products of an alienated under-class who can express themselves

only through violence. It was the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War who called his troops "the scum of the earth, enlisted for drink," adding, "I don't know if they frighten the enemy, but by God they frighten me."

So when these savages go abroad, not only are they themselves bent on mayhem, waiting for them will be their hooligan equivalents and, as often as not, a jittery police force, nerved to get its retaliation in first. Rome, wrote an Italian journalist, has after all been contending with barbarian invasions for 3,000 years. Indeed: and last

week's was another. The glories of the Eternal City were lost on our own barbarians, mindlessly xenophobic, with their disgusting choruses. Outside and inside the Olimpico, there is no doubt that the Italian police were indiscriminately and needlessly aggressive, though they shamefully ignored any provocation by Italian fans. But this is an old, old story: one which our own, new, bourgeois fans, who now find football so modish, quite ignore.

Alexander Chancellor, in a newspaper column, related how friendly things were as he left the Olimpico after that Liverpool v Roma game. Not far away, Roma's incognito, their hooligan fans, were setting about Liverpool supporters with knives, iron bars and chains, while rival Lazio fans tried to press weapons into the hands of the Liverpoolians. The Roman press did properly condemn such excesses.

There are only two answers to an eternal problem. First, simply to ban, again, all England fans from following their team abroad, which will hardly happen. Second, for the majority of peaceful English fans to look at the realities, play the percentages, and ask themselves whether it is wise to take themselves, their children and their Gucci belts abroad.

In the meantime, Glenn Hoddle's resilient England have left Italy to pick up the pieces, and it is by no means sure that they can do so in the coming World

Cup play-offs with Russia. Poor Cesare Maldini, Italy's 65-year-old coach, is more than ever a busted flush. If Hoddle's errors — Walker in goal, Le Tissier in attack — facilitated Italy's win at Wembley, then Maldini's mistakes helped England draw in Rome.

To be fair to him, Italian newspapers that criticised his use of Inzaghi had been urging his selection after a fine display for Juventus against Fiorentina. But to use a player so inexperienced in international football in attack, and push a reluctant Gianfranco Zola into midfield, was a dreadful blunder.

England, I hear, had decided that, were Zola to play in attack, they would pull him back into the defence. It was not necessary, and Ince was thus free to play his crucially brave and powerful role in midfield.

Zola, surely, will be used in attack against Russia, while his Chelsea colleague, Roberto Di Matteo, will be back in midfield after suspension. In their latest match, Russia had an impressive 4-2 home win against Bulgaria. If Andrei Kanchelskis, of Fiorentina, injured in a recent league game, can be fit in time, Russia's attack will be still more formidable. Yuran is back, after his dim days at Millwall, and Simutenko and Kolyanov both play in and know Italian football. Italy's problems, though, lie more in the state of their own and their manager's morale.

French plans, page 9

Grim statistics leave Aitken no place to hide

By Kevin McCarron

THE foyer at Ibrox is in danger of attracting more interest than the field itself. The knots of people who always gather at the doors of the Rangers ground now wait to see who will leave or arrive. Reports of the departure of Paul Gascoigne to an English club are premature, but Rangers are not making extravagant efforts to keep him.

Although Rangers play Dunfermline Athletic at Ibrox today, it is futile for the manager to discuss the importance of victory after two draws at home. The team should listen to him, but the public wishes to find out only what will happen to Gascoigne. Once the game starts, however, interest will develop in Richard Gough, the defender who has re-signed for Rangers after a five-month spell with Kansas City Wizards.

As Gascoigne prepares to decide his future, others can only wait to discover what will become of them. Aberdeen's recent record is so poor that the board's faith in Roy Aitken, the manager, must be fragile, even if the protestations of loyalty to him are, for the moment, sincere.

Aberdeen's dismal statistics are as difficult to shake from the mind as the chorus to a Motown single. Since December of last year, the team has won only two matches in the Bell's Scottish League premier division and both of them occurred at the dreary end of last season. At present, Aitken's side are at the foot of the table.

The manager responds with glum stoicism to the recitation of the facts and weathered another unhappy occasion when Aberdeen lost 3-1 to Dundee United in the Coca-Cola Cup semi-finals on Wednesday. The criticisms of Aitken are well-established and, too, are his replies. He professes himself pleased with the general standard of performance. In this, Aitken is not entirely deluded and Aberdeen looked as accomplished as United in their semi-final. Rather than finding encouragement in that, however, there might be a cause of foreboding. "What on earth is going to happen to us

when we actually lose form?" one supporter asked in wary tentativeness.

Aberdeen's torment arises from the ease with which they lose goals. So far this season, 16 of them have been conceded in eight League fixtures. Selecting a defence for the march with "Hibernian" today will present particular difficulties because Brian O'Neill and John Inglis both picked up injuries on Wednesday. Boin Jess has not yet recovered fitness and Billy Dodds, for family reasons, may also be unavailable. Hibernian's latest signing, the Iceland Under-21 midfielder, what will happen to Gascoigne? "Larusson," is expected to make his debut. His performance, however, will receive little attention from an irritable crowd that is engrossed and worried by Aberdeen's condition.

At Tynecastle, fascination will take a far more conventional form. Heart of Midlothian are the leaders of the premier division, having won their past five matches, and this afternoon they meet Celtic. Jim Jefferies, the Hearts manager, has had no option but to be frugal, but at small cost he has still established an extensive squad.

With the arrival of forwards such as Stéphane Paille and Jim Hamilton, the dangerous dependence on John Robertson, now a veteran, seems finally to have been broken. The club may also have to prove this afternoon that it is well served in defence, since their centre half, David Weir, suffered a blow to the head during an accident at training on Thursday and has still to prove his fitness.

The game at Tynecastle provides the most severe test yet faced by Celtic in Scotland this season. Wim Jansen's team have rightly been praised, but resources are still in key areas and Henrik Larsson and Simon Donnelly, the only available forwards in the Coca-Cola Cup semi-final victory over Dunfermline, Craig Burley has a thigh strain and may be absent.

Against Hearts, Celtic will be asked to demonstrate that they are equipped for the long slog of the League campaign.

Uefa unimpressed by talk of British Cup

By Our Sports Staff

PROPOSALS to create a new British Cup next season, involving leading English and Scottish league clubs, would not necessarily bring an extra route into a lucrative European competition, Uefa sources said yesterday.

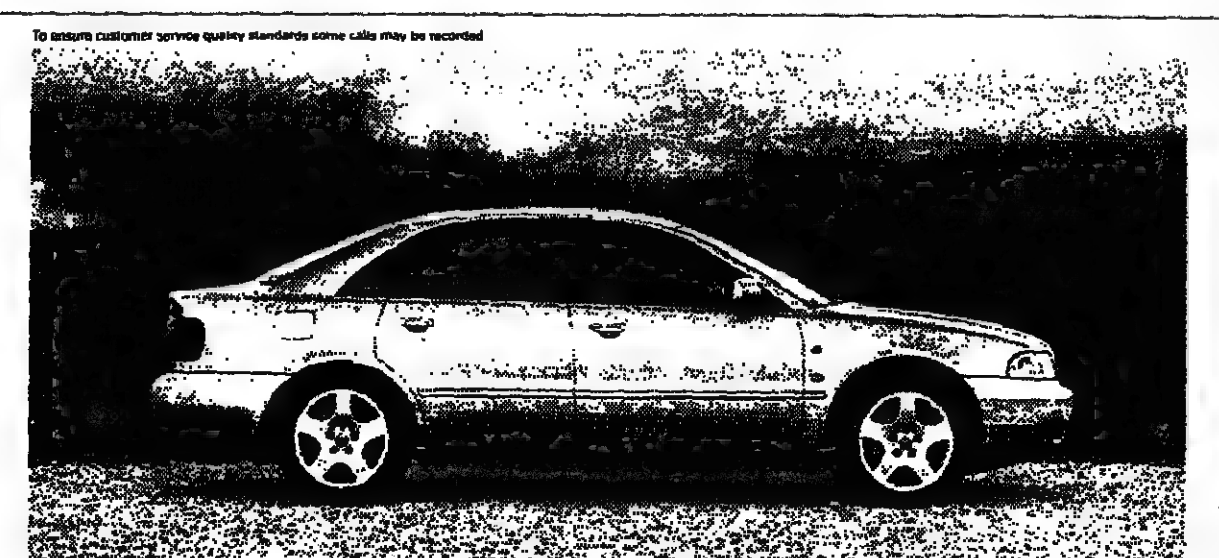
After a week in which Manchester United and Arsenal fielded second-string teams in the Coca-Cola Cup, a competition that no longer guarantees the winner a Uefa Cup place, David Shephards, the Football League chairman, suggested a merger of the English and Scottish competitions.

The problem when they merge is that it could still depend on the number of teams in the national league," a spokesman for Uefa, Euro-

pean football's governing body, said. "The reason England can't enter the League Cup winner into the Uefa Cup, as they were told three years ago, is that they have not reduced the number of teams in the premier league to 18, to make more playing dates available."

The Scottish Football League secretary, Peter Donald, yesterday said: "I can only imagine that it is a personal initiative from Shephards, perhaps a presidential initiative. But there has been no discussion about the concept."

"We both have the same sponsor so there has been talk about a possibility of the winners playing against each other. But the problem has been finding a suitable date."



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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Survivor Smith has last laugh

The Derby County manager revels in a rejuvenation built on his ability to move with the times

The night before, Jim Smith said, he had asked for a bottle of Rioja and the hotel waiter had brought him "something Italian". He had tried to point out the mistake but the man just looked at him blankly. So in the end, he drank it anyway. "It's like *Fanny Hill* in here," Smith said. And then the laugh started, the laugh that is an amalgam of a gruff sort of chuckle and a cackle, the laugh that always makes you laugh with him.

The next time he laughed the laugh, the manager of Derby County was telling a story about a Football Association apparition who was moved to stand up in the midst of some dull divisional meeting, where they were bemoaning the obstacles to change in English football. He told them they had got it wrong, that he had seen the future and that it had a genial, bald 56-year-old at its centre.

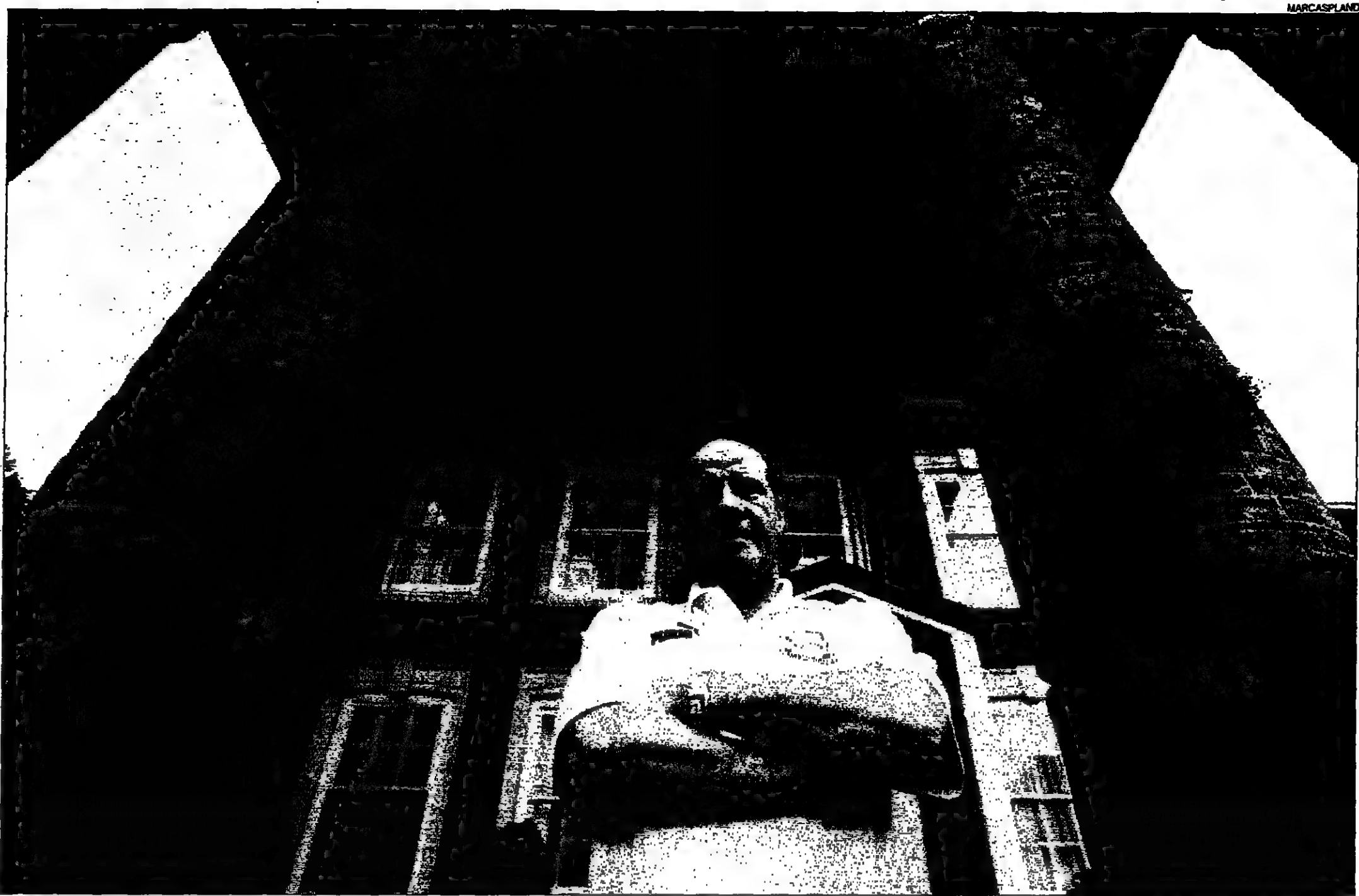
"This bloke had come to watch us pre-season," Smith said yesterday. "He stood up in that meeting and he said 'you are saying we haven't changed but I've been down to Derby County. You have got a masseur in the massage area, you've got the sports psychologist talking to somebody, you've got the fitness coach doing this, the youth team coach doing that, the first team coach over there, the reserve team coach there. And then there's Smithy, just walking around like Capello, watching'."

Like Capello? Liking Jim Smith to Fabio Capello, the suave, patrician coach of AC Milan, the man who won the Spanish championship with Real Madrid last season, might once have been laughed off like a comparison between Bernard Manning and Woody Allen. But the reputation of the man universally known as Bald Eagle has soared to new heights.

The longest-serving manager in English football he might be, but his feats of alchemy at Derby's belt and their rise to sixth place in the FA Carling Premiership in readiness for the clash with Manchester United at Pride Park today, have heightened the respect in which he has always been held. Despite the fact that he is a veteran who has managed nine clubs, Smith has embraced change with the vigour of a radical reformer.

There is still comedy, though, in the improbability of the image of him swanning around the training ground in an overseeing role. He has always been a hands-on manager, intensely involved in every aspect of the club, a half-time cup-thruster, and shouter, an early Yorkshireman who started his working life as a wheelwright.

He has earned a reputation for being one of the last bastions of honour and old-fashioned decency in the game, a real footballer's football manager, someone who is entirely without artifice, as genuine



Tower of strength: Smith, pictured at the team hotel this week, has taken Derby to the lofty heights of sixth place in the Premiership with his shrewd buying, infectious humour and honest toil

as they come. All that, and his Yorkshire brogue and his bluff manner might trick the uninitiated into thinking he is an anachronism in this time of trendy, fashionable young managers such as Rudi Gullit and Glenn Hoddle. Smith, though, has cast off the constraints of age.

"I have always been open to ideas," Smith said. "A few years ago, when I wanted modern things, the board wouldn't accept them. 'Masseur? What do you want a bloody masseur for?' they said. 'We can't afford a masseur.' Now we are allowed to do that. I am a great believer in where we are going in terms of the heightened professionalism in the game and you have got to have professional people in doing that side of the job for you."

"If you do become conservative and your old values are still there, you will not be able to survive. Look at old Billy Nicholson at Tottenham. When the modern wages came in, he couldn't handle it. He could not handle the thought of paying Joe Baggis £500 a week or whatever and he was saying 'get me out of this'. The modern

manager, people like Kenny Dalglish, can handle it because, as players and managers, they are used to that kind of money."

"I have done all of the shouting and haranguing and cup-thriving, too. I used to think, in all honesty, that if I had to put my arm round somebody, he shouldn't be in the team. You can't give them the stick you used to give them now or take the mickey. They're a bit precious nowadays."

"You have to be a bit calmer as a manager. You have to put your arm round them a lot more than you used to do."

"People might think I'm a bit old for the job when they see some of the younger guys around. But it

OLIVER HOLT



ham City, Oxford United, Queens Park Rangers, Newcastle United and Portsmouth all came under his guidance. Birmingham sacked him, he resigned at Newcastle and Portsmouth sent him on a "sabbatical", one of the great football

euphemisms for severance of employment. People have even asked him if he is getting carried away with all Derby's success. "We've got Manchester United tomorrow, then Wimbledon, then Liverpool and Arsenal," he said. "I know what's round the corner."

Through it all, he has never lost his enthusiasm for the job, never been out of work for more than a fortnight throughout the length of his career. When he left Portsmouth, he took up the post of chief executive of the League Managers' Association but he soon discovered it was not for him. He hated being away from the club and thrust.

"It was a strange job," he said. "There was no structure to it, there was no structure to your day. It was answering phone calls from people getting the sack, going up to the FA and going to meetings where you were only there as an observer anyway. During that time, I tried to do a bit of running just to try to keep reasonably fit and on those runs I began to think 'this ain't for me'."

"It made me think that there are

two things that really motivate me in football. One is the training-ground involvement with the players. There is always the banter, the chat, the laugh. The other thing is when your team is really playing well. That is when you feel it is all worthwhile."

"It's a bit different for me now that I'm older. I used to go out for a bevy with the lads, but I don't really do that any more. But you have got to be up to date with the Spice Girls and the music or whatever to be able to put those little barbs into the chat. It's no good saying 'turn that music off'."

Aware that most Derby fans wanted a big name, someone like Bryan Robson or Steve Bruce, to take over from Roy McFarland, not a "bald bugger" like him, Smith soon transformed the fans' opinions of him. Even when they won promotion to the Premiership, most tipped them to go straight back down.

Instead, with careful husbandry and a wiser selection of foreign players than most other clubs have managed, they have gone from strength to strength. They have a

brand new, all-seat stadium, Pride Park, a cosmopolitan side that includes a Costa Rican, a Croat, a Jamaican, an Estonian, a Dane and two Italians, Francesco Balzano and Stefano Ervino, that seems to blend together seamlessly, and the prospect of more funds for better players.

Drawing it all together, of course, is the new Capello, the man they once said was too nice to be a success, even when he led QPR to the top of the old first division and kept them there for ten weeks.

"I used to get all that stuff about being too nice to be a winner," Smith said. "It is a load of crap. One of the things I have enjoyed more than anything else in football is the camaraderie between the managers, having a drink in the office after the match and a laugh. I invite everyone into my office. You cannot be at each other's throats all the time. It is one of the nice parts of the sport where you can go anywhere and say hello and still be welcomed. I don't think we should lose sight of that. It is still a game."

Television team conspires to score an own goal

THOSE unfortunate enough not to be able to watch Italy against England live by satellite this Saturday probably felt safe by tuning in to ITV as the game was going on. After all, was it not the independent channel that was showing the match in its entirety at 10pm? Surely it would take care not to let slip how England were faring in Rome. Apparently not. During the news bulletin shown on ITV at 8.45pm, the unsavoury scenes of baton-wielding carabinieri were displayed for all to see. And there, in the top left-hand corner of the screen, was the delightful information: "Italy 0 Eng 0, 42min".

Southgate's relief

Gareth Southgate, the Aston Villa defender, is one of the more thoughtful players to grace the FA Carling Premiership, but he does tend to cause moments of grief when on international duty (what penalty?). With his England teammates desperate to leave the Olympic Stadium last Saturday, Southgate, drained and dehydrated, was unable to produce a sample for the dope-testers. Teddy Sheringham struggled, too, and it was not for some time that the England entourage set off for home, much to the relief of everybody.

Striking at the roots

Kerry Dixon pulled up numerous trees with England and Chelsea but he has now returned to his Bedfordshire roots. After an unsuccessful stint as player-manager of Doncaster Rovers, he has



re-emerged with St Joseph's, the Luton-based pacemakers of the North Home Counties Sunday League. Dixon, 36, is still scoring goals and also turns out on Saturdays for Boreham Wood in the Isthmian League premier division. Old centre forwards never die, they just fade away.

Ants in his pants

A goalkeeper's lot, frequently, is not a happy one — ask Giovanni Ibarra or Colin Orbell. Ibarra, custodian of Ecuador and Nacional, was playing against Emelec in Guayaquil when he was attacked by a swarm of ants. He ran to the referee and requested permission to leave the pitch immediately to change his clothes. Including, presumably, his pants. Orbell, a soldier, was playing in goal for REME Arbroath against Lower Earley in a Sunday league match when he was approached by his girlfriend, Karen Miller. He had lifted Miller the night before and his former fiancée was clearly not impressed as, brandishing a stiletto shoe, she rushed towards

Irish in a stew

Media representatives were taken aback when they received a press release from the Football Association of Ireland before the World Cup qualifying match against Romania at Lansdowne Road, which ended in a 1-1 draw last Saturday. It informed them that Mick McCarthy's squad would be announced on September 31. Passengers alighting at Dublin airport the day before the game were similarly amused by the Tannoy message that greeted them: "Will John Kennedy, travelling to JFK airport in New York, please contact the airline desk. Thank you."

Little ill-feeling

Savo Milosevic, the Yugoslavia and Aston Villa striker, is in no doubt who to blame for him feeling under the weather recently — Brian Little, the Villa manager. "You'd never believe it," he told the Zagreb daily newspaper. "Brian had a bad bout of flu and came into the dressing-room after training one day and began coughing and sneezing. Six of my team-mates and myself went down with flu the next morning. I just hope he is more aware of what he is doing next time. He's not doing my first-team chances any favours." So there.

STRANGE BUT TRUE: The football columnist of the Bangkok Post glories in the name of Nobby Piles.

Hirst heads down to The Dell for £2m fee

By OLIVER HOLT

DAVID HIRST, reduced in recent weeks to fighting with a team-mate and being booed by his own supporters, yesterday swapped his purgatory at Sheffield Wednesday for the struggle against relegation with Southampton.

David Jones, the Southampton manager, broke the club's transfer record by paying £2 million for Hirst, once a £4 million target for Manchester United and a rival of Alan Shearer for a place in the England front line. Hirst, who grappled with Benito Carbone during Wednesday's recent defeat to Derby County, is a shadow of the player that Alex Ferguson tried to sign before Andy Cole's arrival at Old Trafford. Injuries and loss of form have contributed. Southampton's growing desperation is such, though, that they completed the signing even though Hirst is not fully fit.

After he had agreed terms with Jones and Rupert Lowe, the Southampton chairman, Hirst, 29, underwent extensive medical tests. He is expected to make his debut in the FA Carling Premiership match against Blackburn Rovers today, in the absence of Egil Olsenstad.

Hirst, who scored 128 goals in 310 appearances for Wednesday, is Jones's sixth signing and takes his spending during the past three months to £4.6 million.

Resurgent Swindon could spell trouble for McGhee

By NICK SZCZEPANIK



TO BE fair, as Ron Atkinson might say, no one will expect Mark McGhee, the Wolverhampton Wanderers manager, to go into the Molineux press room and announce his resignation if his team lose to Swindon Town today; but such a result would be bound to heighten suspicions, not to say expectations, of McGhee's imminent departure. Atkinson, who is no stranger to managing in the West Midlands, may or may not (depending on which paper you read) be sanding by.

Steve McMahon, the Swindon manager, speaking in midweek, confirmed the significance of the match today when he said that he hoped that it would not be McGhee's last game in charge of Wolves. However, his own side, despite an injury crisis described by McMahon as "one of the worst I have ever known at a club", which could see as many as ten first-team players sidelined, are hardly likely to take play with a chance to consolidate their second place in the Nationwide League first division, or even assume the leadership should Nottingham Forest slip up at home to Tranmere Rovers.

Swindon's position has surprised many observers to whom last year's team looked moribund, as players such as Kevin Horlock left what seemed a sinking ship. Now, with Chris Hay having scored eight goals since his summer transfer from Celtic, the visitors have the striker in form. Steve Bull, by contrast, confessed to leaving his shooting boots at home after Wolves' 4-2 Coca-Cola Cup defeat

at Reading, despite having scored both goals. Whether McGhee's acquisition of Dougie Freedman, on a month's loan from Crystal Palace, represents an enlightened signing or a last, desperate throw of the dice, remains to be seen.

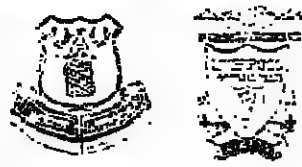
A Wolves win would certainly suit Charlton Athletic, who entertain Stoke City tomorrow and occupy third place after a run of three away wins, the most recent by a 3-0 margin at Huddersfield Town on Wednesday; Alan Curbishley, the Charlton manager, will want to banish memories of their previous home match, a 3-1 defeat by Stockport County, the only blemish on their record at The Valley.

Elsewhere, Nigel Quashie, singled out by Glenn Hoddle as an England star of the future, faces a fitness test before Queens Park Rangers' march against Sheffield United at Bramall Lane, while Terry Fenwick, another manager under pressure, has received a vote of confidence from Terry Venables, the Portsmouth owner and chairman. This, before anyone sniggers, sounds like the genuine article. Venables writes in the programme for the game with West Bromwich Albion at Fratton Park today: "I am totally behind Terry Fenwick. We have got our plans going and we will stick as we are. Pressure from fans will not make any difference."

The top four teams in the second division are in opposition today: Watford, the leaders, receive third-placed Millwall, while two unheralded contenders, Northampton Town (second) and Gillingham (fourth), meet at Sixfields, where a number of FA Carling Premiership clubs are sure to be represented. The reason? Gillingham's Ade Akinbiyi, a centre forward who has been attracting almost as many man-of-the-match awards as visits from scouts. Mike Walker, the manager of goal-shy Norwich City — eight goals in ten league games — who sold him in January, must be kicking himself. Haves visit have-nots at Bournemouth, where Ian Selley, a £500,000-and-rising buy from Arsenal) makes his debut for Fulham.

In the third division, the two bottom teams, Darlington and Doncaster Rovers, clash at Feethams, while Peterborough United, the leaders, have a potentially tricky trip to Scarborough. Second-placed Exeter City will be Brighton and Hove Albion's latest visitors to their unhappy "home" at the Priestfield Stadium and, if Brighton have their way, one of the last. Yesterday the club confirmed earlier reports that negotiations are under way to move their ground-share to Kingfield, the home of Woking, of the Vauxhall Conference, the latest in a long line of potential temporary nests for Brighton that has included Portsmouth, Millwall, Crawley Town, Charlton, Fulham and even Hove dog track, present capacity 1,200 — only a couple of hundred short of the "crowds" that have flocked to Brighton games at Gillingham.

FOOTBALL SATURDAY



EVERTON v LIVERPOOL

Today, 3.0 (sold out)



David Maddock Spice hardly needs to be added to a Merseyside derby, but after Everton's astonishing public show of infighting in midweek, all eyes will be on Howard Kendall's line-up at Goodison Park. At least the manager need not worry about his employment prospects, should the more cynical be correct and he is sacked before Christmas.

He could get a job in pantomime, maybe as Baron Hardop. Kendall reverted to that classic pantomime line after an obvious spat with his players after the 4-1 Coca-Cola Cup humiliation at Coventry City.

It was, fairly obviously, a row, but Kendall maintains "Oh no it wasn't". Should Everton lose this sensitive FA Carling Premiership fixture today, the audience could well cry "behind you", because Kendall will be looking over his shoulder for a man with his P45.

Everton are a poor team and Liverpool are playing well, but no Liverpool supporter would be confident. They have not beaten their neighbours for three years and have not won at Goodison since 1990, despite an obvious ascendancy during that time.

It can be taken for granted that there will be changes to the Everton team. Neville Southall will surely return in goal, even though it has been suggested that his Everton career has run its course, and it will be very interesting to see if Craig Short retains his place after that finger-wagging episode.

Look out, too, for Gary Speed's attire. If he is not sporting a little, white armband with captain written on it, then you will know that Kendall has asserted his authority on a team dubbed Nevevton even by their own supporters.

Kendall needs to do something. It seems perverse to suggest it, given that he was appointed only in the summer, but time is running out on his third season at the club and he needs a boost, sharpish.

What better way to lift morale than to defeat the old enemy. Mind you, Liverpool are due a win and their record against Kendall during his two previous spells is pretty decent.

Roy's Dogs of War put the bite on them, but they have been long shackled and Liverpool have their own guard dog in the form of Ince, who will return to the midfield, and create a new partnership with Leighton.

Everton are more like mangy mongrels, scuffling in the dustbins for any scraps to feed on. Now, that reminds me of a song...

Everton (probable): 4-4-2: N. Southall — E. Barrett, S. Burt, M. Ball, A. Hinchcliffe — G. Stuart, D. Williams, G. Speed, J. O'Shea — D. Ferguson, D. Cantwell.

Liverpool (probable): 4-4-2: D. James — J. McQueen, B. T. Roberts, M. Rushood, B. Johnson — S. McManis, P. Ince, O. Leighton, P. Berger — K. Reddy, R. Foster. Referee: M. Hoed.

TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, BBC1 10.50pm, extended highlights.

PREDICTION: Surely Liverpool must win this one.



Goodison, 1993. One: Grobbelaar gently makes his point. Two: He makes it again. Three: The amicable reconciliation.

11 ELEVEN

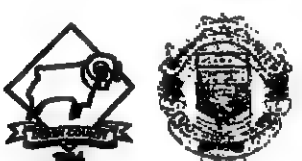
PRIDE OF OUR SCALLY

Goodison Park is the venue today for the Merseyside derby that makes Merseyside seem positively tame. Here are eleven facts — obscure and otherwise — about the Merseyside derby.

1. The first meeting was on October 13, 1884 — a 3-0 win for Everton.
2. Wembley has hosted five Merseyside derbies — two in 1884; two in 1986 and one in 1989. The "score" is 2-1 to Liverpool with two draws.
3. Andy King was pushed off the pitch by a policeman while conducting an interview following his winning goal at Goodison in October 1978.
4. Ian Rush holds the Liverpool goalscoring record in the fixture with 25 goals in 36 games.
5. In March 1988 a goal from Wayne Clarke prevented Liverpool establishing a new record of 30 matches unbeaten from the start of the season.
6. Sandy Brown, of Everton, made a determined bid for "the greatest goal of all time" with his diving header in Liverpool's 3-0 win at Goodison in December 1969.
7. Two Merseyside derby goals have won the BBC Goal of the season competition. Graeme Sharp's long range volley for Everton at Anfield in 1984-85 and Terry McDermott's chip in the 1977 FA Cup semi-final at Maine Road.
8. Dixie Dean holds the Everton derby goal scoring record with 19 goals in 17 games.
9. Bruce Grobbelaar and Steve McManis held an over-enthusiastic post-mortem after Mark Ward's goal at Goodison in September 1993.
10. Kenny Dalglish resigned as Liverpool manager two days after the classic 4-4 draw at Goodison in an FA Cup fifth-round replay in February 1991.
11. Peter Beardsley and David Johnson are the only players to score for both clubs in the fixture.

Compiled by Richard Whitehead

Thanks to John Keith



DERBY COUNTY v MANCHESTER UNITED

Today, 3.0 (sold out)



Oliver Holt After their recent European triumphs for club and, in many cases, country, a match against Derby County might have been seen as a warming-down exercise for Manchester United in former times. Not today: this is almost a top-of-the-table clash in the FA Carling Premiership.

Alex Ferguson, the United manager, was reportedly less than distraught over his team's exit from the Coca-Cola Cup after to Ipswich Town, but a defeat to Jim Smith's side at Pride Park would wipe the smile from his face. With most of his first team having been rested, and Derby struggling with injuries to key players such as Strimac and Eranio, the odds are in favour of the champions.

Derby are the Premiership's form team, everybody's favourite underdogs now that Leicester City seem to be faltering, and United can ill-afford to slip further behind Arsenal in the championship race, especially as the north London side no longer have European competition to divert them.

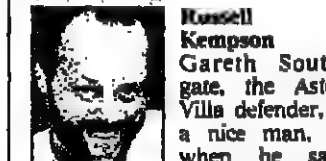
United seem likely to stand by their attacking pairing of Solskjaer and Sheringham, with Cole attempting to pressure them from the bench. In midfield, Beckham is playing his best football since the middle of last season and

with Scholes, Giggs and Butt, this department alone should swing the match narrowly in United's favour.

If anyone can exploit the mini-slump that seems to be afflicting them, though, it is Derby. Conquerors of Tottenham Hotspur in the Coca-Cola Cup and winners of five of their previous six Premiership matches, they are one of the best counter-attacking sides in the country.

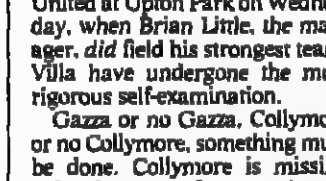
Wanchope, their gangly Costa Rican forward, is exhibiting skills well worth seeing and he and the potent attacking mix of Burton and Baiano are keeping Strutt out.

Derby County (3-4-3): M. Poom — G. Roper, C. Day, J. Hazzard — P. Topley, I. Carney, J. Hurr, C. Powell — D. Burton, F. Barrow, P. Vranchope.



ASTON VILLA v WIMBLEDON

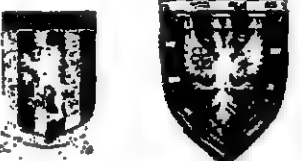
Today, 3.0



Russell Kempson Gareth Southgate, the Aston Villa defender, is a nice man, so when he says "we're not going anywhere", "we've got to look at ourselves" and "there's not enough passion and desire", there must be a problem.

Since the sloppy Coca-Cola Cup exit against West Ham United at Upton Park on Wednesday, when Brian Little, the manager, did field his strongest team, Villa have undergone the most rigorous self-examination.

Gazza or no Gazza, Collymore or no Collymore, something must be done. Collymore is missing today because of suspension —



Fortunately, his hair cannot turn any greyer. Wimbledon arrive in a mud-died frame of mind, too, with only two wins from nine attempts in the FA Carling Premiership. They also departed from the Coca-Cola Cup, losing against Bolton Wanderers after extra time, and Joe Kinnear, the manager, is becoming increasingly tetchy.

Aston Villa (probable): 3-5-2: M. Boshell — J. Enoch, G. Southgate, R. Smeets — F. Nelson, I. Taylor, M. Christie, R. Grayson, A. Wiggs — S. Micoevic, D. Yatch.

Wimbledon (probable): 4-4-2: M. Sullivan — K. Carrington, G. Perry, B. Mitchell, G. Thorne — A. Clarke, R. Earle, J. Jones, S. Castledine — M. Gayle, E. Bloor. Referee: K. Bangs.

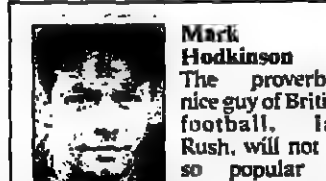
TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, goal highlights.

PREDICTION: Villa to relieve their depression.



BLACKBURN ROVERS v SOUTHAMPTON

Today, 3.0



Matt Dickinson It seems a lifetime ago that David Hirst was being targeted ahead of Eric Cantona as Manchester United's potential saviour. In fact, it was almost seven years ago to the day that Alex Ferguson's £3.5 million bid for a different kind of challenge.

The former England international striker is expected to make his Southampton debut at Ewood Park today because of injuries to Egil Olsenstad and Matthew Le Tissier, and David Jones, the manager, will be hoping for some instant return, having paid out a club record fee of £2 million.

His Blackburn Rovers counterpart, Roy Hodgson, will be hoping his side are considerably livelier than in the Coca-Cola Cup



defeat at Chelsea in midweek. After missed spot kicks by Chris Sutton and Lars Bohinen at Stamford Bridge, it will be interesting to see who steps up today, should they be awarded a penalty.

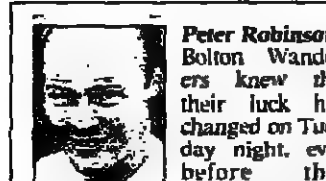
Stéphane Henchoz is expected to play, having recovered from concussion caused by a collision with Gianluca Vialli's elbow, as Rovers try to stay in the FA Carling Premiership's top three.

Blackburn Rovers (probable): 4-4-2: T. Flowers — P. Valley, S. Henchoz, C. Hendry, J. Wicks — C. Sutton, M. Dainton.

Southampton (probable): 4-4-2: P. Jones — I. Dodd, R. Davies, K. Morrison, F. Beards — M. Hodgson, C. Palmer, K. Richardson, R. Blair — A. Davies, D. Hirst. Referee: D. Wilson.

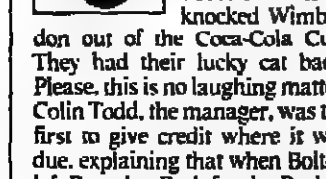
TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, goal highlights.

PREDICTION: Rovers to win 2-0.



LEEDS UNITED v NEWCASTLE UNITED

Today, 3.0



Mark Hodgkinson The proverbial nice guy of British football, Ian Rush, will not be so popular at Elland Road today when he returns with Newcastle United. After his free transfer from Leeds United early this season, Rush was struck by the ignoble affliction that causes a footballer's tongue to move a good deal faster than his feet.

Rush scored in midweek in Newcastle's 2-0 Coca-Cola Cup defeat of Hull City, equalling Geoff Hurst's record of 49 goals in the competition. He has spoken this week of a desire to score



against his former team and it would make a pleasing present for his 30th birthday on Monday.

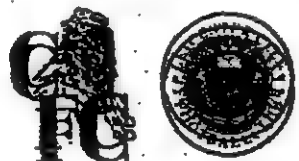
Rod Wallace has found his scoring touch for Leeds, netting a brace in their cup win against Stoke City on Wednesday. If he notches today, he is prepared for a vocal accompaniment. The Leeds players now have their own songs. Wallace's is *Blue Suede Shoes* and the opening line is: "Wallace-a one for the money."

Leeds United (probable): 4-4-2: M. Marjan — S. Halls, I. Rush, D. Horsfield, D. Robertson — G. Kelly, D. Hooper, A. Husted, R. Preece — R. Walsby, M. Keane.

Newcastle United (probable): 3-5-2: S. Gray — D. Preece, P. Albert, S. Hooper — J. Sainsbury, J. Barnes, D. Bunt, P. Lee, W. Banton — I. Rush, D. Tomlinson. Referee: D. Elsey.

TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, goal highlights.

PREDICTION: 2-2 draw.



CHELSEA v LEICESTER CITY

Today, 3.0 (sold out)



Keith Pike There is nothing to be said about a settled team, they used to say, and Chelsea have nothing like a settled team. But as a host of largely self-inflicted wounds begin to catch up on them, the value of Ruud Geul's huge squad and selection rotation should now become apparent.

Geul has given first-team run-outs to no fewer than 26 players this season in only a dozen games. No club in the FA Carling Premiership has used more — Leicester City's total is 19 and Leeds United, by comparison, have used only 15 — and no one will have to be thrown in at the deep end at Stamford Bridge today.

The Chelsea player-manager's problem is not putting people on the pitch but keeping them there: Vialli's dismissal in their Coca-Cola Cup third-round tie against Blackburn Rovers on Wednesday was their fourth of the season.

Today they will be without Wise, their captain, through suspension, and Poyet. The loss of the Uruguayan for the season with a ruptured ligament is a grievous blow. He has been one of Chelsea's most effective and consistent performers.

Only fools these days doubt Leicester's powers of recovery, but with three successive defeats — including elimination from the UEFA and Coca-Cola cups — and an horrendous injury list, Martin O'Neill is hardly exaggerating when he spoke of "a bit of a crisis" this week. "We haven't got the strength in depth and it is something we have to address," the manager said.

Walsby is out for six weeks with a cracked rib and seven regulars are struggling, of whom Heskley (groin) is rated the most likely to recover. "No excuses — we will just have to knuckle down," O'Neill added. He would be delighted with a point.

Chelsea (probable): 4-4-2: E. de Guay — F. Sincin, P. Lobotz, S. Clarke, G. Le Guay — D. Preece, E. Newton, R. D. Mason, C. Bagnasco — M. Hughes, G. Zola.

Leicester City (probable): 3-5-2: K. Koller — S. Poyet, M. Elliott, M. Marshall — R. Sainsbury, M. Leggett, S. Carrivick, G. Fenton, S. Gray — E. Heskley, A. Collins. Referee: U. Horrie.

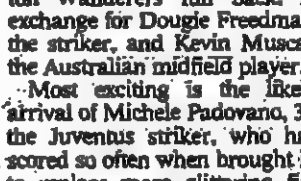
TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, extended highlights.

PREDICTION: Chelsea, with something to spare.



CRYSTAL PALACE v ARSENAL

Today, 3.0 (sold out)



Brian Glanville Crystal Palace have been busy in the transfer market this week. They have signed the 33-year-old Italian left-sided player Ivano Bonetti, after an extraordinary trial game last week in which a team of aspirant Italians was on parade. Another arrival is that of Jamie Smith, the young Wolverhampton Wanderers full back.

In exchange for Dougie Freedman, the striker, and Kevin Muscat, the Australian midfielder player. Most exciting is the likely arrival of Michele Padovano, 31, the Juventus striker, who has scored so often when brought in to replace more glittering figures. Doubtless, Antilio Lombardo would be glad to be reunited with him, because he has been ploughing something of a lone furrow lately.

Arsenal, who defeated Birmingham City 4-1 after extra time in the Coca-Cola Cup with virtually a reserve side, have several injured players and seem sure to give an FA Carling Premiership debut to the bright, little Portuguese left winger, Boa Morte, the star of the show against Birmingham on Tuesday. He scored two of Arsenal's goals and was praised by Arsène Wenger, the manager, for the courage that enables him to cope with English football.

It seems most unlikely that Marc Overmars's injured ankle will heal in time. Patrick Vieira and Lee Dixon, who played on Tuesday, are also in doubt. Arsenal could do much worse

than give a chance to Alberto Mendez, the German-born Spaniard, whose midfield attacking play against Birmingham was also praised by Wenger. Mendez operated on the right, though he prefers the centre. He is fast and elusive.

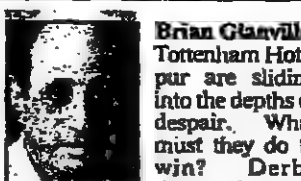
Palace are unlikely to be any more successful in subduing Dennis Bergkamp, the Holland forward, than Arsenal's recent opponents have been. Bergkamp's form has been astounding. His slight-of-foot, flair, shooting power and deft and generous distribution almost make up for the fact (as he subtly suggested) that not much is coming from the Arsenal midfield. Ian Wright, back on his old hunting ground, will probably be on target.

Crystal Palace (probable): 3-5-2: K. Miller — M. Edwards, A. Lintford, H. Henderson — A. Roberts, A. Linton, I. Bonetti, J. Fullerton, G. Gordon — B. Dyer, P. Walters.

Arsenal (probable): 4-4-2: D. Seaman — R. Carr, S. Bould, A. Adams, N. Winterburn — S. Hughes, D. Fitt, E. Trill, L. Boa Morte — D. Bergkamp, I. Wright. Referee: S. Durr.

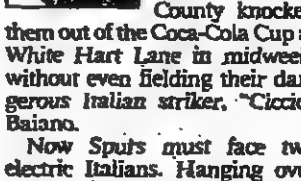
TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, extended highlights.

PREDICTION: Bergkamp to inspire an Arsenal win.



TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR v SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

Tomorrow, 4.0



Brian Glanville Tottenham Hotspur are sliding into the depths of despair. What must they do to win? Derby County knocked them out of the Coca-Cola Cup at White Hart Lane in midweek, without even fielding their dangerous Italian striker, "Ciccio" Baiano.

Now Spurs must face two electric Italians. Hanging over Paolo Di Canio, the maverick Roman winger, is a three-match suspension, while little Benito Carbone cannot wait to leave Sheffield Wednesday for Naples, where he was so happy in the past. By the end of this game, Tottenham may be wishing that neither Italian had been playing. Peter Rudi, the Norway international, may make his debut.

Can Spurs climb out of their hole? Again, there are important injuries. Darren Anderton is still not ready, though he did play part of a reserve game this week. The expensive Les Ferdinand has just had an operation.

Gerry Francis, the manager, generously defended by Gary Mabbutt, has become more and more of an Aunt Sally. But the crisis, surely, is one of confidence. There is enough talent there, if only they can believe in themselves.

Wednesday have had a shaky time, but David Pleat, so controversially eased out as manager of Spurs, has every incentive to succeed on this ground. Should Wednesday score early, and cause Spurs to seize up, he might do so.

Hope for Tottenham lies less in Armstrong than in Fox and Dominguez, their two tiny attackers. The Portuguese is almost always up for the game, so quick in thought and movement, so brave in taking on big defenders. On song, Fox can turn and trouble any defence.

Spurs have no one like Carbone, no one so capable of taking out an opponent, making the killer pass, or going on to score. Where are the heirs of Eddie Bailey, John White, Tommy Harmer, Glenn Hoddle and, yes, Paul Gascoigne, whom Spurs in their desperation may try to buy back? To blame Francis for their mishaps is simplistic. But in this superstitious game, a change at the helm can, sometimes, steady the ship.

Tottenham Hotspur (probable): 3-5-2: I. Walker — R. Wags, S. Carrivick, C. Caldwell — S. Carr, R. Fox, D. Howells, A. Simon, D. Glavin — J. Dominguez, C. Armstrong.

Sheffield Wednesday (probable): 4-4-2: M. Clarke — I. Brezina, D. Walker, J. Newson, N. Kien — V. Collins, B. Carbone, J. Magilton, P. Raul — P. Di Canio, G. Wright. Referee: J. White.

TELEVISION: Tomorrow: Live on Sky Sports 1, 4.0pm.

PREDICTION: Spurs to snatch a draw.

ON MONDAY

Brilliant insights or hopeless guesses? Check our writers' predictions against their weekend match reports.

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

In his new column the Chelsea defender describes being homeless in London, the French view of the Premiership and the agony of an injured colleague

'I smashed a chair and felt much better'

Living in a five-star hotel in the heart of London, striding to Harrods as the local corner shop and dining in restaurants every day will probably sound to most people like an idyllic life of luxury. After almost two months, it is driving me mad.

That is no fault of an excellent hotel or London itself, which I have grown to love since moving to Chelsea from Strasbourg in the summer of 1996. But it is a fact that being cramped into a hotel suite with your wife and two young children is no way to prepare for work when it involves important football matches. The claustrophobia of hotel life makes you constantly feel the need to get outside, but try finding some peace and quiet in Knightsbridge when you have a recognisable face. Other people at the club have noticed that I have been more on edge recently and I can only put it down to

waiting to find our own house, which hopefully will be soon.

You only have to look at Gianluca Vialli to see the importance of settling in. He spent his first six months in a hotel and felt unsettled. He has his own house now and is back to his best form. We had a house in Fulham for the first year I was here, but there was a big mix-up and we came back from holiday in the summer to find it was for sale. Since then my wife, Beatrice, daughter Jade, 6, and son Hugo, 3, have been cramped in a hotel apartment with all our possessions in storage.

It does not do much for our temper, not that I am blaming my recent sending-off against Arsenal on that. It was partly my fault for one bad tackle and partly the referee's for one bad decision. Controlling my mood is one area that I know I have to work on and Rudi Gutthart, the player-manager,

constantly reminds me of it. When I was sent off I smashed a wooden chair in bits in the tunnel and I felt much better straight away, but I am working hard on keeping my cool so it does not happen again.

The view from France
Lucky I can forget my housing problems most days with the constant stream of training and matches, because the atmosphere at Chelsea could not be better. Something summed up by the sympathetic response of everyone to Gianfranco Zola and Roberto di Matteo after England drew 0-0 in Rome. In fact they were not helped when they returned to training for the first time and someone had made a set of T-shirts. On the front it said 'World Cup France 1998 - England'. And on the back? 'Japan/South Korea World Cup 2002 - Italy'. Franco and Roberto managed to laugh and it just



FRANK LEOEUF

proved what a good atmosphere there is at the club, certainly the best I have ever known. Franco has not spoken about the game much, but you can tell how deeply he feels it.

I watched it at Gianluca's house and I have to say I thought England fully deserved to go through. I was very happy because it is important to me that English football is taken seriously. It is fair to say that, until very recently, supporters in France only believed

players such as Eric Cantona and myself could do well in this country because the standard was so poor. Now the Premiership is being seen as a strong force in my home country and I know many other France internationals would love to come over here.

If there is one reason for the change in respect among the French, it has to be the management of Glenn Hoddle. During his years as a player with AS Monaco, he was adored as a great, great

player and also one with deep knowledge of tactics. I actually marked Hoddle on my league debut for Laval in 1988 and it was a very worrying 24 hours before the game. We drew 0-0 and it was a proud moment just to have stopped him scoring!

Up to the Arctic
These are good times to be involved with English football and I expect them to continue in Europe next week. In the UEFA Cup, Liverpool will be travelling to Strasbourg, where I spent more than five years as a player and finished as captain. I am confident that Liverpool can win both games, but their biggest enemy will undoubtedly be themselves as it was when they lost 3-0 to Paris Saint-Germain last season.

I have to say that everyone in France laughed at them when they turned up at the Parc des Princes. They were wearing personal sashes and strolling around on the pitch an hour before kick-off, sitting around and laughing. The Paris players saw it and thought Liverpool were taking it too easy. I know that back in France, the newspapers are already making a big thing of that attitude problem. We, meanwhile, will be heading to the Arctic to play Tromsø on

Thursday. We were hoping the game would be switched to Oslo, but it seems that we will be heading to the far north of Norway, where Tore Andre Flo tells us it will be very cold and very dark. I must pack my winter clothes.

Poyet's cruel break
I CANNOT finish this column without mentioning Gustavo Poyet, whose dreadful injury has upset all of us deeply at Chelsea. His importance to the club after only a few months at Stamford Bridge is shown by the fact that he had played every game this season, no mean feat when you consider the squad system we operate.

It is one of the terrible things about football that the injury happened not in a match when tackles are flying in, but when a few of us were having a quiet practice game at the training ground. I passed the ball to Gustavo, but when he tried to turn and shoot his foot caught in the ground and his cruciate ligament snapped. It is a big blow for all of us, but it has only strengthened our determination to win a trophy this season. Gustavo will be at the forefront of our thoughts if we do.

Next week: McManaman's World

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

(Last week's position in brackets)				HOME					AWAY					LAST 10 MATCHES W-D-L	Overall
PL	PTS	GD	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	W-D-L		
1. ARSENAL (1)	10	22	+17	4	1	0	15	1	2	3	0	12	9	6-4-0	W1
2. MANCHESTER UTD (2)	10	21	+10	4	1	0	10	3	2	2	1	4	1	6-3-1	W1
3. BLACKBURN ROVERS (5)	10	19	+11	2	2	1	12	7	3	2	0	8	2	5-4-1	W1
4. LEICESTER CITY (3)	10	18	+6	2	3	1	9	5	3	0	1	5	2	5-3-2	L1
5. CHELSEA (4)	9	16	+10	2	0	1	7	5	3	1	2	17	9	5-1-3	L1
6. DERBY COUNTY (8)	8	15	+8	3	0	0	8	1	2	0	3	8	7	5-0-3	W3
7. LIVERPOOL (9)	9	15	+6	3	0	1	10	5	1	3	1	6	5	4-3-2	W1
8. NEWCASTLE UTD (10)	7	15	+2	4	0	1	6	4	1	0	1	1	1	5-0-2	W1
9. LEEDS UTD (6)	10	14	0	1	1	3	2	6	3	1	1	9	5	4-2-4	D1
10. ASTON VILLA (14)	10	13	-4	2	1	1	5	7	2	0	4	6	8	4-1-5	W1
11. WEST HAM UTD (7)	10	13	-5	3	0	1	7	4	1	1	4	5	13	4-1-5	L1
12. COVENTRY CITY (12)	10	12	-3	2	4	0	8	6	0	2	2	0	5	2-6-2	D4
13. CRYSTAL PALACE (11)	10	11	-4	0	1	3	3	8	3	1	2	6	5	3-2-5	L1
14. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (13)	10	10	-5	2	2	1	4	4	0	2	3	2	7	2-4-4	L1
15. WIMBLEDON (15)	9	9	-1	1	2	3	6	7	1	1	1	4	4	2-3-4	L1
16. SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (18)	10	9	-9	2	1	2	7	9	0	2	3	7	14	2-3-5	W1
17. BOLTON WANDERERS (17)	9	8	-4	0	3	1	1	2	1	2	2	7	10	1-5-3	L1
18. EVERTON (16)	9	8	-5	2	1	2	9	9	0	1	3	2	7	2-2-5	L1
19. SOUTHAMPTON (20)	10	7	-9	2	1	3	6	7	0	0	4	2	10	2-1-7	W1
20. BARNLEY (19)	10	6	-21	1	0	4	3	14	1	0	4	4	14	2-0-7	L6

ATTACK		
Goals scored	Avg	
1. Arsenal	27	2.70
2. Chelsea	24	2.67
3. Blackburn	20	2.00
4. Derby	16	2.00
5. Liverpool	16	1.78
6. Leicester	14	1.40
7. Manchester Utd	14	1.40
8. Sheffield Wed	14	1.40
9. West Ham	12	1.20
10. Crystal Palace	9	1.11
11. Aston Villa	11	1.10
12. Newcastle	7	1.00
13. Wimbledon	10	0.90
14. Bolton	8	0.89
15. Everton	11	0.89
16. Coventry	8	0.80
17. Southampton	8	0.80
18. Barnsley	7	0.70
19. Tottenham	6	0.60

DEFENCE		
Goals conceded	Avg	
1. Manchester Utd	4	0.40
2. Newcastle	5	0.71
3. Leicester	8	0.80
4. Blackburn	9	0.90
5. Derby	10	1.00
6. Arsenal	11	1.10
7. Coventry	11	1.10
8. Leeds	11	1.10
9. West Ham	11	1.10
10. Crystal Palace	11	1.10
11. Wimbledon	11	1.22
12. Crystal Palace	13	1.30
13. Bolton	12	1.33
14. Aston Villa	15	1.50
15. Chelsea	14	1.58
16. Southampton	17	1.70
17. West Ham	17	1.70
18. Everton	16	1.78
19. Sheffield Wed	23	2.30
20. Barnsley	28	2.80

CAUTIONS		
Cards issued	Yellow	Red
1. C Palace	25	0
2. Chelsea	19	3
3. Leeds Utd	21	1
4. Bolton	18	2
5. Sheffield Wed	18	2
6. Coventry	19	1
7. Tottenham	19	1
8. Everton	17	2
9. Arsenal	16	0
10. Southampton	16	0
11. West Ham	18	0
12. Manchester Utd	17	0
13. Blackburn	14	0
14. Barnsley	15	0
15. Wimbledon	15	0
16. Leicester	14	0
17. Derby	13	0
18. Liverpool	13	0
19. Newcastle	9	1
20. Aston Villa	8	1

OFFENDERS		
By team	Cards/players	
Arsenal	4Y Bergkamp, Bould	
Aston Villa	3Y Taylor	
Barnsley	4Y Sheridan	
Blackburn	2Y+1R Valery	
Bolton	4Y Sellers	
Coventry	5Y Williams	
Derby	5Y Tuttle	
Everton	4Y+1R Bili	
Leeds Utd	3Y (2 players)	
Leicester	3Y Heskey, Lennon	
Liverpool	4Y Ince	
Manchester Utd	3Y (4 players)	
Newcastle	2Y+1R Batty	
Sheff Wed	3Y Carlisle, Carbone	
Southampton	2Y (3 players)	
Tottenham	4Y+1R Edinburg	
West Ham	3Y (3 players)	
Wimbledon	3Y Kimble	

REFEREES		
Cards issued	Yellow	Red
1. S Dunn	3	18
2. G Willard	5	29
3. P Durkin	6	30
4. U Rennie	4	17
5. M Bodenham	6	24
6. P Alcock	4	15
7. G Barber	5	18
8. M Riley	5	18
9. G Ashby	4	15
10. D Ellery	5	17
11. P Jones	6	17
12. G Poll	7	19
13. J Winter	5	14
14. M Reed	2	5
15. K Burge	5	14
16. D Gallagher	6	15
17. A Wilkie	7	17
18. N Barry	5	12
19. S Lodge	5	10

SCORERS		
Goals		
Bergkamp (Arsenal)	10	
Wright (Arsenal)	9	
Sutton (Blackburn)	9	
Carbone (Sheff Wed)	9	
Baino (Derby)	6	
Gallagher (Blackburn)	6	
Hartson (West Ham)	5	
Wallace (Leeds)	5	
Davies (Southampton)	4	
Dublin (Coventry)	4	
Oversmear (Arsenal)	4	
Poyet (Chelsea)	4	
Vialli (Chelsea)	4	

SCORING TRENDS		
Goals per half	1st	2nd
Arsenal	17	10
Aston Villa	4	7
Barnsley	4	3
Blackburn	16	4
Bolton	5	3
Chelsea	13	11
Coventry	5	3
Crystal Palace	5	4
Derby	8	8
Everton	3	3
Leeds Utd	9	2
Leicester	4	10
Liverpool	4	12
Manchester Utd	6	8
Newcastle	4	3
Sheff Wed	6	8
Sheff Wed	2	6
Southampton	2	4
Tottenham	2	4
West Ham	4	8
Wimbledon	2	8

HOME		
Attendance	Average	% full
Arsenal	37,925	99%
Aston Villa	35,907	91%
Barnsley	18,561	100%
Blackburn	23,988	96%
Bolton	23,988	96%
Chelsea	31,528	100%
Coventry	18,328	77%
Crystal Palace	21,429	81%
Derby	26,895	90%
Everton	36,653	89%
Leeds	35,283	88%
Leicester	20,467	95%
Liverpool	35,301	100%
Manchester Utd	55,091	98%
Newcastle	36,687	100%
Sheff Wed	24,867	62%
Sheff Wed	15,175	100%
Southampton	26,279	75%
West Ham	25,416	98%
Wimbledon	18,844	83%

AWAY		
Attendance	P	Average
Arsenal	5	28,559
Aston Villa	6	26,847
Barnsley	5	25,431
Blackburn	5	24,011
Bolton	5	21,154
Chelsea	6	30,182
Coventry	4	33,143
Crystal Palace	6	27,936
Derby	5	25,373
Everton	4	28,038
Leeds	5	25,075
Leicester	4	27,035
Liverpool	5	27,446
Manchester Utd	5	30,522
Newcastle	2	28,724
Sheff Wed	5	26,916
Sheff Wed	4	32,385
Southampton	5	28,956
Tottenham	6	29,934
West Ham	3	29,131
Wimbledon	3	29,131

INTERNET		
FA Premiership clubs' official websites		
Arsenal	www.arsenal.co.uk	
Aston Villa	www.avfc.co.uk	
Barnsley	www.barnsley.co.uk	
Blackburn	www.blackburn.co.uk	
Bolton	www.bolton.co.uk	
Chelsea	www.chelseafc.co.uk	
Coventry	www.cocfc.co.uk	
C Palace	www.cpalace.co.uk	
Derby	www.derby.co.uk	
Everton	www.everton.co.uk	
Leeds	www.leeds.co.uk	
Leicester	www.leicester.co.uk	
Liverpool	www.liverpool.co.uk	
Man Utd	www.manutd.co.uk	
Newcastle	www.newcastle.co.uk	
Sheff Wed	www.sheffwed.co.uk	
Southampton	www.southampton.co.uk	
Tottenham	www.tottenham.co.uk	
West Ham	www.westham.co.uk	
Wimbledon	www.wimbledon.co.uk	
FA Premiership	www.fa-premiership.co.uk	

WEEKEND MATCHES

TODAY

Kick-off 3.0 derbies at hotel match
 Pools counts numbers in brackets
 In Premiership fixtures, 7 denotes sold out
 otherwise seats available

FA Carling Premiership

(1) Aston Villa v Wimbledon					
(2) Blackburn v Southampton					
(3) Chelsea v Leicester					
(4) Crystal Palace v Arsenal					
(5) Derby v Manchester Utd					
(6) Everton v Liverpool					
(7) Ipswich v Newcastle					
(8) W. Ham v Bolton					

Nationwide League

First division

(9) Bury v Birmingham					
(10) Grimsby v Middlesbrough					
(11) Mansfield City v Reading					
(12) Norwich v Stockport					
(13) Nottingham Forest v Tranmere					
(14) Oldham Utd v Ipswich					
(15) Port Vale v Bradford					
(16) Shrewsbury v West Bromwich					
(17) Sheffield Utd v QPR					
(18) Sunderland v Huddersfield					
(19) Wolverhampton v Swindon					

Norm Forest	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sheff Wed	10	7	1	2	18	5	22
Sheff Utd	10	6	1	3	14	4	19
Exeter	10	6	1	3	23	14	19
Bradford	10	6	1	3	12	9	19
Sheff Utd	10	5	3	2	11	7	19
Birmingham	10	5	2	3	0	11	17
QPR	10	5	2	3	12	11	17
Sheff Wed	10	5	1	4	15	16	16
Sheff Utd	11	4	2	5	14	15	14
Port Vale	11	4	2	5	14	15	14
Middlesbrough	11	4	2	5	13	9	14
Sunderland	11	4	1	5	14	15	13
Wolves	11	3	4	4	12	13	13
Reading	11	3	3	5	13	21	11
Bury	11	2	5	4	12	14	11
Sheff Utd	11	2	5	4	12	14	11
Tranmere	11	2	3	6	14	14	10
Man City	11	2	3	6	10	11	9
Nottingham	11	2	3	6	10	11	9
Huddersfield	11	0	4	7	5	17	4

Second division

(20) Blackpool v Grimsby					
(21) Southend United v Fulham					
(22) Brentford v Walsall					
(23) Northampton v Gillingham					
(24) Gillingham v Shrewsbury					
(25) Plymouth v Southampton					
(26) Walsall v Middlesbrough					
(27) Wigan v Luton					
(28) Walsall v Burnley					
(29) Wycombe v Bristol Rovers					

Walsall	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Northampton	11	6	3	2	12	6	21
Middlesbrough	11	6	3	2	16	10	21
Blackpool	11	6	3	2	12	6	21
Bristol R	11	4	5	2	12	11	17
York	11	5	4	2	14	13	17
Wycombe	11	5	4	2	14	13	17
Fulham	11	5	2	4	11	9	17
Grimsby	11	5	2	4	11	9	17
Barnet	11	4	4	3	12	9	16
Preston	11	4	4	3	11	8	16
Gillingham	11	4	4	3	11	8	16
Oldham	11	3	5	3	18	19	14
Walsall	11	4	2	5	13	14	14
Sheff Wed	11	4	2	5	13	14	14
Wycombe	11	3	4	4	17	18	13
Blackpool	11	3	3	5	15	20	12
Sheff Wed	11	3	3	5	15	18	12
Wendron	11	3	3	5	15	18	12
Sheff Wed	11	3	2	6	9	18	11
Southend	11	3	2	6	9	18	11
Plymouth	11	3	2	6	9	18	11
Sheff Wed	11	3	2	6	9	18	11
Burnley	11	1	5	5	8	12	8

* not including last night's matches

Third division

(30) Barnet v Hull					
(31) Luton v Exeter					
(32) Cambridge Utd v Rochdale					
(33) Colchester v Shrewsbury					
(34) Darlington v Doncaster					
(35) Harrogate v Charlton					
(36) Macclesfield v Mansfield					
(37) Rotherham v Cardiff					
(38) Scarborough v Peterborough					
(39) Sharnford v Lincoln					
(40) Swansea v Notts County					
(41) Torquay v Chester					

Peterborough	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sheff Wed	11	7	3	1	27	11	24
Sheff Wed	11	7	3	1	18	8	24
Notts Co	11	6	4	1	17	10	22
Sheff Wed	11	6	3	2	18	14	19
Sheff Wed	11	6	3	2	18	14	19
Macclesfield	11	4	4	3	15	10	17
Sheff Wed	11	4	4	3	15	10	17
Lincoln	11	4	4	3	11	12	16
Rochdale	11	5	4	3	17	12	15
Sheff Wed	11	4	4	3	15	10	17
Doncaster	11	4	3	4	16	17	15
Torquay	11	4	3	4	15	15	15
Sheff Wed	11	4	3	4	15	15	15
Barnet	11	4	3	4	14	16	15
Sheff Wed	11	4	3	4	14	16	15
Luton	11	4	3	4	11	10	15
Cardiff	11	3	5	2	12	12	14
Sheff Wed	11	3	5	2	12	12	14
Sheff Wed	11	4	1	6	15	17	13
Sheff Wed	11	3	5	3	10	17	13
Sheff Wed	11	3	5	3	10	17	13
Hull	11	2	6	7	14	21	8
Sheff Wed	11	2	6	7	14	21	8
Doncaster	11	0	4	7	7	24	4

Musical Conference

- (1) Dora v Stalybridge
- (2) Gateshead v Chesham
- (3) Hove v Stevenage
- (4) Heston v Welton
- (5) Heston v Welton
- (6) Kettering v Hayes
- (7) Kidderminster v Rushden & Diamonds
- (8) Slough v Morcambe
- (9) Telford v Tamworth
- (10) Woking v Leek
- (11) Yeovil v Northwich

Bell's Scottish League

- (10) Aberdeen v Hibernian
- (11) Dundee Utd v Motherwell
- (12) Hearts v Celtic
- (13) Kilmarnock v St Johnstone
- (14) Rangers v Dunfermline

First division

- (15) Arbroath v Hamilton
- (16) Falkirk v Greenock Morton
- (17) Raith v Partick
- (18) Stirling v Ayr
- (19) Stirling v Dundee

Second division

- (20) Brechin v East Fife
- (21) Inverness CT v Clydebank
- (22) Livingston v Forth
- (23) Queen of Spas v Clyde
- (24) Stirling v Stirling Albion

Third division

- (25) Albion v East Stirling
- (26) Alloa v Queen's Park
- (27) Cowdenbeath v Arbroath
- (28) Dunfermline v Rosyth
- (29) Stirling v Stirling Albion

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier division

- Bromsgrove v Burton Albion
- Doncaster Rovers v King's Lynn
- Grimsby Town v Nuneaton
- Leeds United v Huddersfield
- Sheff Wed v Huddersfield
- Sheff Wed v Huddersfield
- Sheff Wed v Huddersfield
- Sheff Wed v Huddersfield
- Sheff Wed v Huddersfield
- Sheff Wed v Huddersfield

UNION LEAGUE: Premier division

- Albion v Stalybridge
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UNION LEAGUE: Premier division

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UNION LEAGUE: Premier division

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UNION LEAGUE: Premier division

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UNION LEAGUE: Premier division

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UNION LEAGUE: Premier division

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UNION LEAGUE: Premier division

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UNION LEAGUE: Premier division

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UNION LEAGUE: Premier division

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COVERAGE

TELEVISION: BBC1: Today, Football
 from 12.00pm. Match of the Day
 from 10.50pm. Channel 4: Tomorrow,
 Football: today, from 2.00pm. Sky
 Sports: Today, 1. Head the Back
 from 8pm. Sports Illustrated: Saturday,
 from 8.30pm. All from 8pm. Live
 1: Futbol Mundial from 7pm. Tottenham
 Hotspur v Stoke City Wednesday, live, from
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Battle of the wounded knee

A deliberate kick could have ended
Doddie Weir's career. Instead,
the Newcastle forward is raring to go

The face is that of a countryman, the walk too, the loose-limbed stride of one accustomed to the great outdoors. The walk out of the hotel in Pretoria, though, was one of the most painful that Doddie Weir has taken; more of a hobble, really, aided by crutches as Weir left his grim-faced colleagues on the British Isles tour of South Africa in June to begin the journey home and to discover whether he still had a rugby career to which he could look forward.

The professional sportsman lives with the possibility of injury. In Weir's case, the cruciate ligaments of his left knee were damaged by a deliberate kick from Marius Bosman, the Mpumalanga lock, at a time when the Scot was playing as well as at any time in his career. He had taken the weight off Martin Johnson, the Lions captain, by appearing in three of the first four tour games and making a strong case for inclusion in the international XV.

The initial diagnosis suggested a prolonged absence from the game, even cast doubt over Weir, now 27, resuming after seven years as a mainstay of Scotland's pack in 45 internationals. That two months later, he was able to take up the cudgels for Newcastle is a tribute to his own determination and the quality of rehabilitation that his employers could offer him.

"If I played against him [Bosman] again, I wouldn't go out to try to get him but, let's just say, I wouldn't buy him a pint afterwards," Weir said. "It happened, what can you do about it?" The answer to that is considerable, if the injured party chooses to go through due process of law in a foreign country; in England there is a three-year period in which claims

can be made after an injury and, if the same is true in South Africa, proceedings may yet go forward should Weir suffer a breakdown. But his reaction is typical of the cheerful, honest (some might say naive) approach that makes him so endearing a companion. It is precisely those qualities that made his departure so sad for the Lions. They recognised a talented player, but also the warm-hearted nature of a man in whose make-up the family ethic looms strong. One of four children brought up on the family's 1,200-acre farm in the Borders, Weir agonised long and

hard over whether to turn professional 18 months ago. It was not only the miles — and you suspect that if it had been a Midlands or London club knocking on his door rather than Newcastle, that he might have stayed put — but the break with the family concern, with friends and the long-standing links with Melrose. He consulted with many of Scottish rugby's luminaries, among them Finlay Calder, the flanker who led the Lions in Australia in 1990, the year before Weir broke into the Scotland team.

"I was involved at a very early age with Finlay, John Jeffrey, David Sole — hard men on the field but ready with some very good advice off it," Weir said. "They took me under their wing when I was 20 — no age for a forward — they said 'here's a daft young liddle come along, you stick with us'. That was great. You learn off these boys."

"Finlay lived only ten minutes away and we have very close links. His son is the same age as my smallest brother, Christopher, and they go to school together. Fin was one of the people I talked to about moving, he knew Rob Andrew, and he said 'go for it'. I've always been of the way of thinking that if



At home in Northumberland: "If I played against him [Bosman] again, I wouldn't go out to try to get him, but I wouldn't buy him a pint afterwards," Weir says

someone offers you anything you should give it a try.

"If you don't like it, you can always say, 'I won't do that again'. That was my attitude coming to Newcastle. A three-year contract didn't seem that long and it helped that Gary Armstrong and I were making the move together. So far I've loved every minute of it." Weir describes the organisation that links the rugby club at Kingston Park with the football club at St James' Park as "one big happy family", a feeling reinforced by the

help that he received from the footballing side to restore him to full health.

The nervous period between his return from South Africa and the work required to start this season when it was decided that no operation was necessary, also allowed Weir time to evaluate his position. "You learn to take what you can, when you can," he said. "Next weekend's match could be the end of my career and, if that's to be, I'll enjoy it."

"If I have another ten years, I'll

still be enjoying it. I regard myself as very fortunate. I went to Edinburgh University, I have the qualifications for farm management. I retain an association with Carlisle, a representative in the Border region, and professional rugby exists at another level where I can enjoy myself and get paid for it."

If that seems a happy-go-lucky attitude, it conceals the maturing of George Wilson Weir (Dod is the Scottish diminutive for George, his grandfather's name, hence

Doddie). He is now far more reflective about his game, he studies aspects of play in a way that he would never have done in his amateur days with Melrose. Optimist that he is, he counts 1997 a good year in which he received awards for his performances with Scotland, won his way on to a Lions tour and married Kathy, a Northumbrian; their home, at Corbridge, is less than two hours away from their respective families.

"You set yourself goals, realistic goals. The next Lions tour is too far

away, so is the next World Cup though we derive great inspiration from our fitness coach at Newcastle, Steve Black, who says we should be playing until we're 40," he said. "I'm looking no further ahead than Christmas — I want to be successful with Newcastle and I'm raring to go for Scotland." The pre-Christmas opposition, of course, includes South Africa on December 6 and the chance to play the Springboks that Weir was so cruelly denied with the Lions may yet come round again.

Campaign is too fragmented, with players unable to get their teeth into competitions

The book launch went well on Tuesday night at the International Sportsman's Club in London. It was a chance to see some old faces. I had a joint launch with Jerry Guscott that reflects our friendship. His will probably outlive mine because he's been around so much longer. Hopefully both books will give an insight into what goes on, what makes Jerry tick, and likewise myself, in what was a momentous season. I've been busy promoting it this week. For instance, on Thursday I was at Harrods at 10 o'clock, Hatchards at 11, Dillons at midday and Books Etc at 1 o'clock and I had to be back at Sudbury for training, which started at 2 o'clock. I couldn't be late because, as captain, I have to set an example and if anyone is late then I'm the first to give them a dressing down. These things mustn't detract from the primary focus, which is rugby and Saracens tomorrow.

Having been a key part of the Lions tour, Jerry's back injury is a bitter pill to swallow. It's something he has been monitoring and he thought it wasn't as serious as it has turned out. Being the guy Jerry is and having been out for so long with his groin injury he knows the ropes now and he will only come back when he is ready. Realistically he won't be fit until the New Year. When we spoke he was still upbeat, however.

It is a setback for England in the short term because he has been in great form, but what it does is give the management the time to assess the level of talent in the country. These are the sort of problems that may face England going into a major

Structure of season must be changed

tournament. It is important that you have got experienced replacements to call on, not guys who have never played against New Zealand, South Africa and Australia.

We are pretty good mates. On the Lions tour he, Jason Leonard and I spent much of our spare time together. We all get on very well. We form a trio and we have the same sense of humour and enjoy each other's company. Underneath the cool, laid-back exterior, Jerry is someone who is tremendously determined and focused. The public perception of him is misunderstood. When I broke into the England squad, I found him a very approachable guy, as all the Bath guys were. I was delighted to be asked by the BBC to be one of the guys who surprised him on the set of *Gladiators* for *This is Your Life*. Mike Catt, Nigel Redman and I charged on to the set clad in full Lions kit in Birmingham. He didn't have a clue what was going on and it was just as well we interrupted him, because he was about to forget his lines.

Injuries like his hit home that it is not

LAWRENCE DALLAGLIO



something that is reserved for Ian Hunter or anyone else. I have been lucky, only missing one game last year and that was because of flu. Long may that continue. One of the benefits of professionalism is that you can get the right diagnosis and the right treatment a lot quicker.

Jerry has been a big part of Bath's success over the years. The challenge for Wasps this year is to repeat our success and sustain it over a period of time. You don't have to look very far for analogies — Manchester United in football, Chicago Bulls in basketball, the All Blacks in rugby union. For any sporting empire that is what you are about, repeating success. The challenge is to continue to win, dominate the sport, get a grip of it and to prove that we're not just a comet that comes once every 70 years.

With Europe over for the moment, this weekend it is back to the league and, as I said, Saracens — who are second at the moment, having won both their games. The corresponding match last year launched our arrival at Loftus Road. The domestic competition is another challenge for the

players; we're back to English referees and we have to alter things accordingly to ensure that we win. Michael Lynagh is their key and it's no coincidence that, last season, Saracens' demise coincided with Lynagh's injury.

The level of injuries around makes one wonder about the number of games we are all playing. Martin Johnson and I played virtually 47 or more last year, then went off on the Lions tour. I don't know how long that level is sustainable. It is OK for one season but, year on year, you have to ask whether the players around now will still be around in three years' time. Everyone has a solution but you've got to keep everyone happy — the RFU, the clubs, the players and the supporters.

People need to sit around with a blank piece of paper and come up with a solution. What we are looking for is quality rather than quantity. What I do know is that in two years' time, if the structure of the season is still the same and we have played the same number of games before the World Cup, we are going to be at a severe disadvantage. We must act now.

The season is too fragmented and you can't get your teeth stuck into any one competition before you move onto another. That creates problems for everyone, not just players. We need to concentrate on one competition — Down Under it is the Super 12, here we are not sure what it is yet. We need to recognise that we have to take the right tournament and market it in the right way, play it all at once then move on to the international season.

Lynagh's expertise provides the key to Saracens' success

De Glanville names alternative captain

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

PHIL DE GLANVILLE, the England captain in the past eight internationals, yesterday advanced the claims of Lawrence Dallaglio to succeed him when the international season resumes against Australia on November 15. In a remarkably unguarded interview, De Glanville said that he would favour the Wasps flanker ahead of other contenders, including himself.

"At the moment I think probably I would pick Lawrence Dallaglio as the captain for the first game," De Glanville told Radio 5 Live in response to a question asking what choice he would make were he Clive Woodward, England's new coach. "He has the respect of all the players. He is a man who leads from the front."

"You've already seen Martin Johnson perform very well for the Lions. He has a different approach from Lawrence... he leads by example if ever anyone did. My money is probably on Lawrence, but Clive's his own man and, together with his selection committee, he'll make up his own mind." Johnson led the British Isles tour party to victory over South Africa in the summer.

De Glanville's place in the England team was considered in doubt after a poor showing in Sydney against Australia last July, when two of Australia's four tries came from breaks past the Bath

centre. However, he was far from the only offender in a third England XV and his club form this season has been consistent.

"I don't think he's [Woodward] going to chop and change for each game," De Glanville said. "I'm just guessing he'll have one for the four games before Christmas and another for the five nations' championship. Then someone will captain the tour to New Zealand. You can't change it every week. That would probably disturb things because a rugby union captain does have a significant role to play in the games."

Such is the attention that is focussed on the England captain in any one of the leading team sports — football, rugby, cricket — that De Glanville might have been better advised to keep his own counsel. He will, though, be aware that Woodward does not want to create an over-dominant figure in the role because of the coach's desire to pick his teams on form, and then determine the leader.

Dallaglio himself refused to comment on De Glanville's view but he has been in this situation before, when there was intense speculation a year ago as to who would follow the long-serving Will Carling. At that stage, Dallaglio, Johnson and Jason Leonard were considered front runners until De Glanville was named by Jack Rowell, then England's coach.

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RUGBY UNION

Levett unwilling to 'throw money down the drain'

BY MARK SOUTER

THE Allied Dunbar Premiership spluttered back into life this weekend, albeit temporarily, amid further warnings about the future wellbeing of professional club rugby. Ashley Levett, the owner of Richmond, has given the starkest indication yet that he may withdraw his multimillion-pound backing because of mounting, "unsustainable" losses.

Levett, a tax exile in Monte Carlo, reinforced the concerns expressed by fellow investors that without a radical restructuring of the season, backers would consider pulling out.

In a televised interview this week, Levett said: "This year [Richmond] will lose between £1.5 million and £1.8 million. I do not think it is a case of sustaining losses [but], rather whether I want to sustain them. The answer is no. I could carry on to the detriment of myself. I do not want to do that. I speak not only for myself, but for a number of other owners."

Levett said that self-made men, such as himself, would not continue to "throw money down the drain. At this time we are not being given a sporting chance. We have people telling us what time to open, what to sell and at what price. That, to me, is unacceptable. There has got to be changes in this respect before now and the end of the season. We must have something that works."

Having invested £5 million already, Levett is confident that with co-operation and willingness on all sides there is a healthy and profitable long-term future for the domestic game. Some owners believe that the Rugby Foot-



Levett: tells of losses

ball Union (RFU) is privately content to see clubs self-destruct, but Cliff Brittle, the chairman, has stressed he understands their concerns.

Brittle has already held one meeting with the top 24 clubs, and English Rugby Partnership (ERP), which represents them, last week set up a working party to look at the future structure. Chaired by Charles Levison, of Wasps, it includes Graham Smith, one of the RFU's representatives on the ERP. Dick Greenwood, Peter Wheeler, Rob Andrew, John Mitchell and Peter Bellch. It has to report by mid-December.

The clubs want league fixtures to be more regular and the season less fragmented by European and international matches. They would prefer the Heineken Cup and the European Conference to run throughout the season — rather than in a six to eight-week block — but find themselves outvoted by clubs from Wales, Ireland and Scotland. The new regime at Twickenham, however, accepts that four

back-to-back internationals before Christmas is too many.

Today at least, Levett should be pleased because a rare full house is likely when Richmond meet Harlequins, their southwest London neighbours, at the Athletic Ground for the first time in league or cup. Richmond, unbeaten at home in 17 league matches, recall Barry Williams, the Wales hooker, and play Earl Vaa at fly half.

Bath meet Bristol, who have never beaten them in 14 league matches. The last time that the sides met at the Recreation Ground two years ago Bristol were humiliated 76-7, their biggest league defeat. Bath could include Iain Ballshaw, their exciting England Under-18 full back.

Leicester visit Northampton, who won the corresponding fixture last season. Since then the fortunes of Ian McGeechan's side have dipped and they have lost their previous five league matches. Tim Rodber returns as captain after a three-match absence and Paul Grayson will undergo a late fitness test. Leicester play Walsley Sarcel on the right wing and Joel Stranksy at fly half.

Newcastle, the early joint leaders with Saracens, travel to Heywood Road to play Sale. After their win over Richmond ten days ago, Saracens face a more daunting task at Loftus Road tomorrow against Wasps, the champions. Andy Gomarsall returns at scrum half and Andy Reed and Mark Weston are paired at lock as Wasps, Gloucester and London Irish clash at Kingsholm, but Gloucester will be without Philippe Saint-Andre.

Exiles sign up for Scotland

BY KEVIN PERKIE

THE eighteen players from English clubs named in the Scotland senior squad were relieved last night after signing contracts to play for their country.

News that terms had been reached came as the inter-district championship — which has become an incentive for Scottish players to stay at home by doubling as the European qualifying competition — began last night.

The Border Reivers were visited by the defending champions, Calcutta. Reds. The championship continues tomorrow when the world's oldest representative match, between Glasgow and Edinburgh, takes place at Scotstoun Stadium.

Andy Nicol, the Bath captain, the principal players' spokesman, outlined the relief

that potentially hazardous negotiations with the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU) had been conducted smoothly. "This is great from our point of view because it has been sorted out four weeks before the first international, unlike last season when things ran on until January," he said.

"What we have agreed are participation contracts which are exactly the same as last year. We are all signed and all happy. It is great that it is done and dusted."

The exiles will receive payment for attending squad sessions, as well as match fees, according to status — that is, British Isles, international players, then uncapped players — which is in line with the home-based players' deal.

Originally, the SRU had indicated that they wanted to minimise payments to the

exiles in an attempt to increase the incentive to remain in Scotland.

However, the main attraction of playing north of the border is now the increased opportunity of competing in the Heineken Cup, with three of Scotland's four districts assured of places in the next two seasons. That in turn has transformed the inter-district championship, previously a somewhat low-key affair, played over the festive period, into Scotland's most important domestic competition.

Glasgow, who became the first Scottish side to qualify for the Heineken Cup's knock-out stages by beating Ulster last Sunday, are in the curious situation of having to play two thirds of their qualifying matches for the competition next season before they are out of this season's.



Brown is confident of establishing his medal credentials for the Sydney Olympics in Chicago tomorrow

Brown launches campaign to overhaul marathon old guard

David Powell finds Britain's best long distance men worried about the future

AFTER the glum week that British athletics has had, it hardly needs to be said that the marathon runners are in a gloom. Let alone one of its most cheerful athletes. Paul Evans, though, whose yesterday, two days before he defends his Chicago Marathon title, to warn that British marathon running is facing bankruptcy. Of a sort, anyway.

Not, it must be said, in its promotions account, for the London Marathon remains Britain's most successful athletics occasion and one of the most vibrant events in the national sporting calendar. The trouble is with its victory account. How long before the image of the marathon in Britain slides to where British tennis was for two decades before Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski came along? Nice showpiece event (Wimbledon/London Marathon), shame about the success (poor).

It is beginning to tell on the London Marathon, in which there has been no home men's winner since 1993, and Evans drew attention here to a crisis looming. Here of all places, where Evans, Ramona Martin and Marian Sutton have all won in the

past two years, following a winning standard set in the Eighties by Paul Davies-Hale and Steve Jones. Evans, a former shoe factory worker, fears the production line is grinding to a halt.

Martin is 39, Evans 36. Richard Nururkar, Britain's most prominent champion performer of recent years, is 33, and Gary Staines, next in the pecking order, is 34. There is practically no body coming through to keep Britain on the marathon map. Nobody other than Jon Brown.

There should be young blokes kicking our backsides. It is worrying there is nobody coming through apart from Jon," Evans said.

Apart from Jon, if the body of British athletics lies a mouldering in the grave, Jon Brown's does not. Like Jones and Martin before him, Brown, 26, is an accomplished 10,000 metres and cross-country runner who should prove a handful over the marathon.

Brown and Evans hold two of the few jewels still belong-

ing to British athletics. Evans is seeking to keep hold of his here, having run faster than ever in warm-up races. Brown, though, is preparing to sacrifice his. He doubts whether he will defend his European cross-country title. There are only eight weeks until the European championships. "It can cause serious long-term problems rushing training after a marathon," he said.

When Brown revealed in March his intention to move on to the marathon, he said that he was "not really impressed" with any present-day marathon runners and that there was "a lot of room at the top to do well."

In May, he only narrowly missed Martin's British 10,000 metres record then turned his attention to preparing for Chicago.

His build-up has not been perfect. First Brown suffered a troublesome hip then, two weeks ago, he was out running when dog took him clean off his feet, bruising a

toe and hip. He makes light of the difficulties but has toned down his dismissive comments on other marathon runners.

"The fine-tuning is not there, but it should not make too much difference," Brown said. "At a safe guess, I would say I am in 2:09 shape, definitely." Given that Evans won last year in 2hr 8min 52sec that may be good enough for a debut victory. Todd Williams, of the United States, and Khalid Khanouche, from Morocco, are the main dangers.

This is Brown's first step towards the 2000 Olympic marathon. "The marathon is not like the track where you have got African guys running 26.30 and, physically, it is not possible for me to do that. There is nobody doing marathons who is physically much better than I am. In most cases it is quite the opposite. Realistically, it is my only chance of getting an Olympic medal."

While Brown and Evans are running for a \$50,000 first prize, Williams, the top US 10,000 metres runner, has the incentive of \$1 million for a new American record, held by Bob Kempainen with 2hr 8min 47sec.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Australia will rely heavily on Brisbane

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

A GROIN injury did not hamper Allan Langer during Brisbane Broncos' win over Hunter Mariners in the world club championship final in Auckland yesterday, nor will it inhibit Australia's selectors from including the masterful scrum half in the tour party for the forthcoming three-match series against Great Britain.

Even a half-fit Langer is hard to handle, as Hunter discovered in their 36-12 defeat. In league competition and the world championship, Australian and British opponents have bowed before Brisbane's unyielding excellence. Their players will dominate Australia's squad, which is to be announced on Monday.

That Brisbane collected the world club prize came as little surprise against opponents doomed in more senses than one. Rurnour has Hunter relocating from Queensland to Glasgow next year, or just being broken up. During a first half notable for a hat-trick of tries by Darren Smith in 11 minutes, it seemed as if they were drowning without a struggle.

The second half partly redressed the balance. Hunter narrowly missed out on as many tries as they scored — two by Zisti on the right and another by Carlow on the opposite wing — but late scoring flourishes by Renouf and Sallor underlined the Broncos' superiority, and the danger that they will pose to Great Britain.

Australia have an embarrassment of riches. Langer and Ricky Stuart, of Canberra, are again vying for the scrum half position, a Wembley on November 1. Whatever his medical condition, there is still no finer visionary than Langer, who hounded Hunter into submission.

Whatever the merits of an overblown and competitively lopsided exercise, the world championship came up with the right winners and made the British game recognise some home truths. These are being faced up to in a proposed re-structuring of the domestic competition and more co-ordinated development of the grass roots.

However, these initiatives are almost certainly too late to spare Great Britain from the punishment of a whitewash at Australia's hands next month. At club level, the Australian game is light years ahead, although British appetite and application are unlikely to be found lacking on the international stage.

Langer was at greater risk of aggravating his injury by lifting a trophy that is half his size. Whether it will be played for next year is not entirely certain. If so, a top-four playoff between the British Super League and a unified Australian competition is the likeliest scenario.

RUGBY UNION FIXTURES

Today	Group A	Group B	Cambridge University v Bristol University
<p>1st division</p> <p>Alfred Dunhill Premiership</p> <p>Bath v Bristol</p> <p>Northampton v Leicester</p> <p>Richmond v Harlequins (2.15)</p> <p>Salisbury v Gloucester</p> <p>2nd division</p> <p>Bedford v West Hartlepool</p> <p>Exeter v London Scottish</p> <p>Ospreys v Cardiff</p> <p>Rotherham v Worcester</p> <p>Widened v York</p> <p>3rd division</p> <p>Harrogate v Worcester</p> <p>Leeds v Nottingham</p> <p>London Welsh v Rugby (2.45)</p> <p>Ulster v Scarlets</p> <p>Ospreys v Scarlets</p> <p>Rotherham v Worcester</p> <p>Widened v York</p>	<p>Cross Keys v Cardiff (2.0)</p> <p>Landowry v Newport (2.0)</p> <p>Pontypool v Macclesfield (2.0)</p> <p>Ranvier v Trefort (2.0)</p> <p>South Wales Police v Aberystwyth (2.0)</p> <p>4th division</p> <p>Cardiff v Newport</p> <p>Cardiff v Newport</p> <p>Cardiff v Newport</p> <p>Cardiff v Newport</p> <p>Cardiff v Newport</p>	<p>Group C</p> <p>Glanrhydd v Aberystwyth</p> <p>Glanrhydd v Aberystwyth</p> <p>Glanrhydd v Aberystwyth</p> <p>Glanrhydd v Aberystwyth</p> <p>Glanrhydd v Aberystwyth</p>	<p>Cambridge University v Bristol University</p> <p>Cambridge University v Bristol University</p> <p>Cambridge University v Bristol University</p> <p>Cambridge University v Bristol University</p> <p>Cambridge University v Bristol University</p>

RUGBY UNION STATISTICS

TOP POINTS-SCORERS	TOP TRY-SCORERS	TRIES PER MATCH	FEWEST TRIES CONCEDED
<p>1. J. J. Evans (Cardiff) 45</p> <p>2. J. J. Evans (Cardiff) 45</p> <p>3. J. J. Evans (Cardiff) 45</p> <p>4. J. J. Evans (Cardiff) 45</p> <p>5. J. J. Evans (Cardiff) 45</p>	<p>1. D. Brown (London Welsh) 11</p> <p>2. D. Brown (London Welsh) 11</p> <p>3. D. Brown (London Welsh) 11</p> <p>4. D. Brown (London Welsh) 11</p> <p>5. D. Brown (London Welsh) 11</p>	<p>1. Scarlets 4.5</p> <p>2. Scarlets 4.5</p> <p>3. Scarlets 4.5</p> <p>4. Scarlets 4.5</p> <p>5. Scarlets 4.5</p>	<p>1. Scarlets 4.5</p> <p>2. Scarlets 4.5</p> <p>3. Scarlets 4.5</p> <p>4. Scarlets 4.5</p> <p>5. Scarlets 4.5</p>

GUIDE TO THE OTHER WEEKEND FIXTURES

Today	OTHER SPORT	Tomorrow
<p>1st division</p> <p>Alfred Dunhill Premiership</p> <p>Bath v Bristol</p> <p>Northampton v Leicester</p> <p>Richmond v Harlequins (2.15)</p> <p>Salisbury v Gloucester</p> <p>2nd division</p> <p>Bedford v West Hartlepool</p> <p>Exeter v London Scottish</p> <p>Ospreys v Cardiff</p> <p>Rotherham v Worcester</p> <p>Widened v York</p> <p>3rd division</p> <p>Harrogate v Worcester</p> <p>Leeds v Nottingham</p> <p>London Welsh v Rugby (2.45)</p> <p>Ulster v Scarlets</p> <p>Ospreys v Scarlets</p> <p>Rotherham v Worcester</p> <p>Widened v York</p>	<p>BASKETBALL: Basketball League: Derby Storm v Thames Valley Tigers (7.30)</p> <p>NEWCASTLE: Newcastle Eagles v Warrington Wolves (7.30)</p> <p>WARRINGTON: Warrington Wolves v Newcastle Eagles (7.30)</p> <p>GOLF: Alfred Dunhill Cup (at St Andrews)</p> <p>ICE HOCKEY: Bournemouth v Huddersfield Giants (7.30)</p> <p>ICE HOCKEY: Bournemouth v Huddersfield Giants (7.30)</p> <p>ICE HOCKEY: Bournemouth v Huddersfield Giants (7.30)</p> <p>ICE HOCKEY: Bournemouth v Huddersfield Giants (7.30)</p> <p>ICE HOCKEY: Bournemouth v Huddersfield Giants (7.30)</p>	<p>NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Cardiff v Newport (2.0)</p> <p>NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Cardiff v Newport (2.0)</p> <p>NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Cardiff v Newport (2.0)</p> <p>NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Cardiff v Newport (2.0)</p> <p>NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Cardiff v Newport (2.0)</p>

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RACING: CHAMPIONS' DAY AT NEWMARKET DELIVERS PROGRAMME OF HIGHEST QUALITY

Xaar to wear juvenile crown

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

THE concept may have ruffled a few feathers among racing's traditionalists but the first Champions' Day at Newmarket looks set to live up to its ambitious billing today.

Moving the Challenge Stakes, Rockefellers and Dewhurst Stakes from their traditional Saturday slot to a Sunday card which already boasts the Champion Stakes and Cesarewitch means the vast majority of racing fans can witness a vintage day's sport.

While the Dubai Champion Stakes is the feature race, the Thoroughbred Corporation Dewhurst Stakes is the most fascinating. With the rain having kept away and Xaar, unofficially the top-rated juvenile in Europe, almost certain to line up, the group one race is the best two-year-old race this season.

Henry Cecil last won with Diesis and relies on a son of that 1982 winner, Daggers Drawn, who appears to have improved since his Doncaster victory. He impressed gallop watchers as he came five lengths clear of the useful Craigsteel last week and is sure to run well.

The owners of Tamarisk reportedly turned down an offer of £1 million from Godolphin after his impressive Houghton Sales Stakes success over course and distance 18 days ago, and ante-post backing for the colt suggests there is better to come.

Central Park has not been seen since winning the Champagne Stakes at Goodwood but his form deserves the closest scrutiny. However, the trip could be on the short side and the lay-off is a concern.

The two that interest me most are Desert Prince and Xaar. After finishing second in

the Coventry Stakes, Desert Prince had a two-month break before running in the Prix Moriny, in which he was unsuited by the way the race was run but still finished a close fifth behind Charge D'Affaires and Xaar. In the past few weeks the David

rivals. Apart from beating Charge D'Affaires by three lengths, a line through the third, Speedy Too, a further five lengths away, suggests he could have at least 7lb — or three lengths — in hand of the others today.

André Fabre's two previous runners in the Dewhurst Stakes — Zafonic and Pennecamp — won and went on to land the 2000 Guineas. Xaar, a son of Zafonic blessed with a sparkling turn of foot, should have the good ground he requires to be seen at his best and can complete a treble for Fabre.

On form, Pilsudski should leave his rivals toiling in the Dubai Champion Stakes. A world-class horse at this trip, as he proved when thrashing Desert King in the Irish Champion Stakes, he finished a highly respectable second to Prince Celebre in the Arc. The worry is whether the

admirably tough colt will be able to give his best only 13 days after his exertions at Longchamp. There must be a doubt and, given his cramped odds, I prefer horse who has been prepared with this race in mind. Leap Sauvage will relish conditions underfoot and showed his wellbeing when winning at Longchamp four weeks ago.

Top Cees has been laid out for the Tote Cesarewitch and looks reasonably treated on his win at Ayr four weeks ago when he defied top weight over an inadequate trip, but he would appreciate easier ground. Lightly weighted three-year-olds have an excellent record and Motet makes considerable appeal. He has improved markedly since being stepped up in trip and his latest success, over today's distance at York, has been boosted by the victories of the third and fourth.

Chris McGrath



Pilsudski, nearside, attempts to add the Champion Stakes to his Breeders' Cup success

Grazia can land valuable Redcar prize



TODAY'S RACES ON TELEVISION

2.15 NEWMARKET: Elnadim shaped like a potential champion sprinter when bolting up in the Diadem Stakes last time. He steps up in distance on easier ground, but he is bred on similar lines to the good miller, Mehthaaf. Everything was right for Rebecca Sharp at Ascot last time — a steadily run, turning mile on fast ground — except for luck in running. She cannot be relied upon for compensation in different conditions here. Decorated Hero may struggle under his penalty, but there could be some value in Muchea.

4.45 NEWMARKET: Flawless is 3lb better off for two lengths with Name Of Love on their encounter over course and distance a fortnight ago, but may struggle to make it tell against that progressive filly, who quickens well off a strong pace. Also, Flawless did not look quite herself that day and the ground will not be so fast here. Flamma is an intriguingly unknown quantity, while Qilin and Wenda will be suited by the extra furlong. But perhaps an outsider to consider is Belle De Nuit, who has been doing well this autumn.

3.15 REDCAR: Mantles Star, a half-brother to Compton Place, could prove suited by dropping back from seven furlongs, having been collared close home at Kempton last time. By contrast, Hopping Higgins may be better over five. Mijana and Shudder have form in group company, whereas the doubt about Grazia is her lack of experience. But she will improve for her promising debut at Newmarket a fortnight ago.

Chris McGrath

NEWMARKET

1.40 Cashmere Lady 3.30 Tamarisk
2.15 KAHAL (nap) 4.10 Revogue
2.55 Sea Victor 5.20 Shattering Sky

Timekeeper's top rating: 4.10 BENNY THE DIP.
Our Newmarket Correspondent: 2.55 Motet.
3.30 DAGGERS DRAWN (nap), 4.10 Pilsudski.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT
TODAY'S RACING MEETING

DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE

1.40 ROTHMANS ROYALS NORTH SOUTH SERIES FINAL

(Handicap: £37,613; 1m) (30 runners)

121 (2) 0831380 APACHE STAR 20 (2.5.5) (A. Dwyer) 11.5
122 (1) 0204045 KINGSLEY OF BIRCH 14 (2.5.5) (A. Dwyer) 11.5
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Young blood seeking to carve a niche

Years of planning and dreaming are on the line for the Cliveden Stud today when Daggers Drawn steps out

The tang of infinite possibility. That is perhaps the principal ingredient in the cocktail of Flat racing. It stands to reason, then, that the longer you can savour the tang, the greater the intoxication.

Infinite possibility muzzled all around me on 24 slim, straight little legs: half a dozen weanling foals, nibbling at hands and shivers, weaving and butting the invading humans. Snooty-nosed, like children at their first school, a gang of snooty-nosed little aristocrats.

How much for that little lot? Perhaps £400,000 as they stand. But any one of them could eventually command a king's ransom. Or not, of course. You don't know. No body does. Nobody can. That is what racing's infinite possibilities are all about.

One, a fraction burlier than the rest, was showing his sense of his own class, in the playful-serious dominance games that young herd animals never tire of. And he was the top animal, the one from whom most was — no, not expected. People in racing never expect. They hope. They are very good at hope. They have to be.

And Philip Freedman, manager of Cliveden Stud, owned by his father, Louis, recited his pedigree. It was only about the 150th pedigree I had listened to that morning, another litany of the great, the glorious and the polyphiloprogenitive. You will forgive me if I have forgotten the details. But it was full of gorgeous names, a magical spell of infinite possibilities. And the little colt certainly looked capable of

SIMON BARNES Talking horse



becoming magic in action. Or not, of course. I remember John Dunlop, the trainer, standing at the top of his all-weather gallop at Arundel, surrounded by unraced two-year-olds. "Any one of these horses... any one of them..." could just turn out to be the greatest racehorse that ever lived. Almost certainly, but right now, no one can say that they won't.

I remember the words of Charlie Whittingham, the American trainer then in his 80s, when I asked him what kept him going. "I got a young horse. No one with a young horse ever committed suicide." Infinite possibility; is there anything in life more life-affirming?

If racing has a further suggestion here, it can only be

victory. For there comes a time with every young horse when the arc of potential meets the straight line of reality. And after that, nothing is ever the same again. The moment of reality is called a race. With every race for two-year-olds horses, a large number of dreams die. One alone is rekindled.

Come the autumn and the two-year-olds have grown and matured and they look more like grown-up horses than gawky delicacies. And it is time for asking very serious questions. For the best, it is time to ask about classic potential.

Which brings us to the Dewhurst Stakes at Newmarket this afternoon. The winner may be the greatest racehorse that ever lived. It will certainly shorten in the betting for the classic races of next year. And Cliveden Stud has a runner, of course. Owned by them, bred by them. They have been savouring his possibilities — no, not since the day he was born. Much longer. Long before he was conceived. Before his sire was selected. In fact, it all goes back to his great grandmother, and then to Philip Freedman's powerful belief that there was and is something very special about the mother.

Milly Moss is the great grandmother, the founding mother, if you like, of the Cliveden operation. She is their Eve. Sun and Shade is the granddaughter and mother. "I always felt that Sun and Shade was better than her performance on the race track suggested. Much better. She was as good a filly as we have ever raised. I thought she had

group one potential." But she died when she raced, residue, Freedman believes, of an infection when young rather than a genetic disability. She raced in the United States, where in some places it is permitted to race horses on a drug that prevents bleeding. But Sun and Shade retired to become a broodmare without realising her full possibilities. Or at least, that is the principle on which Freedman has operated.

It is no more than a hunch, a passionate liking for a good horse, an absurd belief that the mare has a right to do herself justice and that she will do so through her progeny. And so a visit to a stallion named Diest, which is the term for the little dagger mark used in scores to denote wicketkeeper. And so we have a smart two-year-old colt with the smart name of Daggers Drawn. Today, the colt and the dream have an appointment with reality.

Owner-breeders have more fun of it than most. They have much longer to savour the tang. Jump racing has its continuity in individual horses; the continuity of Flat racing is in the blood, or at least in the blood lines. "About 55 per cent of our horses win a race," Freedman said. "I think that is a little above average. Many things go wrong. It's about being lucky." In pre-sheikh days,



Flat racing is in the blood for Philip Freedman, whose aspirations ride on Daggers Drawn in the Dewhurst Stakes at Newmarket today



Freedman is surrounded by potential at the Cliveden Stud

sold. But hard figures were never mentioned. Daggers Drawn runs today in the bright yellow with black polka dots that carried Reference Point to victory in the Derby ten years ago.

Sheikhs don't need luck. Nor does the Aga Khan, with perhaps 180 broodmares. Cliveden has 17 at present strength. It is about cantriness. Sound judgment, dumb luck. A kind of inspiration, an ability to look ahead to where infinite possibility and hard reality meet.

It is about coping with crushing disappointment and wild optimism. Racing is nothing without either of these things. But, like the horses themselves, they are not much good if you can't keep them under some kind of control.

It is a business based on sentiment, on a feeling for a horse, because only sheikhs can play the big numbers game. The only racing certainly can be found in colossal numbers of horses. The busi-

ness is impossible without sentiment, but sentimentality is the road to ruin. Above all it is a balancing act: money, hope, rationality, hunch, delicately poised above the terrible chaos that leads to financial oblivion. Owner-breeders have more fun, but if they can't pass the // test, they are never going to last the pace.

It will be a crushing disappointment for Cliveden Stud, for the Freedmans, if Daggers Drawn does not put up some sort of decent show this afternoon. But crushing disappointments are the essence of the game. How to deal with them? To plot, once again, the meeting between the first and the dam, whose genes will magically combine to produce something greater than either... greater than anything.

To walk into the field with the weanlings. To be nibbled and bumped and butted. Simply to stand in the field and to breathe in the tang. Infinite possibility...

THUNDER
2.30 Down The Yard. 3.00 Principally Affair. 3.35 Art Prince. 4.05 Talitha. 4.35 Anabranth. 5.05 Supreme Charm. 5.35 Vodka Premiere.

GOING: GOOD

2.30 SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS HANDICAP HURDLE (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
1. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
2. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
3. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
4. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
5. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
6. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
7. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
8. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
9. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
10. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
11. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
12. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)
13. SHOTTER MEADOW LADY RIDERS (22.48; 2m 11yds) (13 runners)

GOING: GOOD

3.00 OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
1. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
2. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
3. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
4. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
5. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
6. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
7. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
8. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
9. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
10. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
11. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
12. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
13. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
14. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
15. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
16. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)
17. OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (22.04; 2m) (17)

GOING: GOOD

3.35 WARWICKSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE (24.98; 2m 11yds) (7)
1. WARWICKSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE (24.98; 2m 11yds) (7)
2. WARWICKSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE (24.98; 2m 11yds) (7)
3. WARWICKSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE (24.98; 2m 11yds) (7)
4. WARWICKSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE (24.98; 2m 11yds) (7)
5. WARWICKSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE (24.98; 2m 11yds) (7)
6. WARWICKSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE (24.98; 2m 11yds) (7)
7. WARWICKSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE (24.98; 2m 11yds) (7)

GOING: GOOD

2.20 FERRY BOAT HANDICAP CHASE (24.38; 2m) (8 runners)
1. FERRY BOAT HANDICAP CHASE (24.38; 2m) (8 runners)
2. FERRY BOAT HANDICAP CHASE (24.38; 2m) (8 runners)
3. FERRY BOAT HANDICAP CHASE (24.38; 2m) (8 runners)
4. FERRY BOAT HANDICAP CHASE (24.38; 2m) (8 runners)
5. FERRY BOAT HANDICAP CHASE (24.38; 2m) (8 runners)
6. FERRY BOAT HANDICAP CHASE (24.38; 2m) (8 runners)
7. FERRY BOAT HANDICAP CHASE (24.38; 2m) (8 runners)
8. FERRY BOAT HANDICAP CHASE (24.38; 2m) (8 runners)

GOING: GOOD

2.50 GERALD MANNING 70TH BIRTHDAY JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (3-Y-O; £2,795; 2m) (9)
1. GERALD MANNING 70TH BIRTHDAY JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (3-Y-O; £2,795; 2m) (9)
2. GERALD MANNING 70TH BIRTHDAY JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (3-Y-O; £2,795; 2m) (9)
3. GERALD MANNING 70TH BIRTHDAY JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (3-Y-O; £2,795; 2m) (9)
4. GERALD MANNING 70TH BIRTHDAY JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (3-Y-O; £2,795; 2m) (9)
5. GERALD MANNING 70TH BIRTHDAY JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (3-Y-O; £2,795; 2m) (9)
6. GERALD MANNING 70TH BIRTHDAY JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (3-Y-O; £2,795; 2m) (9)
7. GERALD MANNING 70TH BIRTHDAY JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (3-Y-O; £2,795; 2m) (9)
8. GERALD MANNING 70TH BIRTHDAY JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (3-Y-O; £2,795; 2m) (9)
9. GERALD MANNING 70TH BIRTHDAY JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (3-Y-O; £2,795; 2m) (9)

GOING: GOOD

3.20 SPORTING INDEX HURDLE (24.97; 2m) (4)
1. SPORTING INDEX HURDLE (24.97; 2m) (4)
2. SPORTING INDEX HURDLE (24.97; 2m) (4)
3. SPORTING INDEX HURDLE (24.97; 2m) (4)
4. SPORTING INDEX HURDLE (24.97; 2m) (4)

4.05 WILLIAM TILL HANDICAP HURDLE (23.85; 2m 3f) (8)
1. WILLIAM TILL HANDICAP HURDLE (23.85; 2m 3f) (8)
2. WILLIAM TILL HANDICAP HURDLE (23.85; 2m 3f) (8)
3. WILLIAM TILL HANDICAP HURDLE (23.85; 2m 3f) (8)
4. WILLIAM TILL HANDICAP HURDLE (23.85; 2m 3f) (8)
5. WILLIAM TILL HANDICAP HURDLE (23.85; 2m 3f) (8)
6. WILLIAM TILL HANDICAP HURDLE (23.85; 2m 3f) (8)
7. WILLIAM TILL HANDICAP HURDLE (23.85; 2m 3f) (8)
8. WILLIAM TILL HANDICAP HURDLE (23.85; 2m 3f) (8)

GOING: GOOD

4.35 PSM COMPUTERS HANDICAP CHASE (23.41; 2m 11yds) (5)
1. PSM COMPUTERS HANDICAP CHASE (23.41; 2m 11yds) (5)
2. PSM COMPUTERS HANDICAP CHASE (23.41; 2m 11yds) (5)
3. PSM COMPUTERS HANDICAP CHASE (23.41; 2m 11yds) (5)
4. PSM COMPUTERS HANDICAP CHASE (23.41; 2m 11yds) (5)
5. PSM COMPUTERS HANDICAP CHASE (23.41; 2m 11yds) (5)

GOING: GOOD

5.05 CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
1. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
2. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
3. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
4. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
5. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
6. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
7. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
8. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
9. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
10. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
11. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
12. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
13. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
14. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
15. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
16. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)
17. CLAREMONT NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (23.27; 2m 11yds) (17)

GOING: GOOD

5.35 CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
1. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
2. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
3. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
4. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
5. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
6. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
7. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
8. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
9. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
10. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
11. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
12. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
13. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)
14. CHIPPING NORTON MAIDEN HURDLE (22.88; 2m 11yds) (14)

GOING: GOOD

3.50 CHARISMA GOLD CUP (Handicap Chase; £10,529; 3m) (10)
1. CHARISMA GOLD CUP (Handicap Chase; £10,529; 3m) (10)
2. CHARISMA GOLD CUP (Handicap Chase; £10,529; 3m) (10)
3. CHARISMA GOLD CUP (Handicap Chase; £10,529; 3m) (10)
4. CHARISMA GOLD CUP (Handicap Chase; £10,529; 3m) (10)
5. CHARISMA GOLD CUP (Handicap Chase; £10,529; 3m) (10)
6. CHARISMA GOLD CUP (Handicap Chase; £10,529; 3m) (10)
7. CHARISMA GOLD CUP (Handicap Chase; £10,529; 3m) (10)
8. CHARISMA GOLD CUP (Handicap Chase; £10,529; 3m) (10)
9. CHARISMA GOLD CUP (Handicap Chase; £10,529; 3m) (10)
10. CHARISMA GOLD CUP (Handicap Chase; £10,529; 3m) (10)

GOING: GOOD

4.20 WEATHERBY'S/MUSCO HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE NOVICES CHASE (23.70; 2m) (5)
1. WEATHERBY'S/MUSCO HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE NOVICES CHASE (23.70; 2m) (5)
2. WEATHERBY'S/MUSCO HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE NOVICES CHASE (23.70; 2m) (5)
3. WEATHERBY'S/MUSCO HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE NOVICES CHASE (23.70; 2m) (5)
4. WEATHERBY'S/MUSCO HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE NOVICES CHASE (23.70; 2m) (5)
5. WEATHERBY'S/MUSCO HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE NOVICES CHASE (23.70; 2m) (5)

GOING: GOOD

4.55 PARK HURDLE (23.51; 2m 5f) (5)
1. PARK HURDLE (23.51; 2m 5f) (5)
2. PARK HURDLE (23.51; 2m 5f) (5)
3. PARK HURDLE (23.51; 2m 5f) (5)
4. PARK HURDLE (23.51; 2m 5f) (5)
5. PARK HURDLE (23.51; 2m 5f) (5)

WOLVERHAMPTON

7.00 Verity. 7.30 Malcoza. 8.00 State Of Caution. 8.30 Legal Issue. 9.00 Pink Ticket. 9.30 Classic Ballet.

GOING: STANDARD

7.00 ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)
1. ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)
2. ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)
3. ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)
4. ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)
5. ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)
6. ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)
7. ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)
8. ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)
9. ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)
10. ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)
11. ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)
12. ATHENA MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O; £2,070; 7f) (12 runners)

GOING: STANDARD

7.30 HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
1. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
2. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
3. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
4. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
5. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
6. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
7. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
8. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
9. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
10. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
11. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
12. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)
13. HERA CLASSIC STAKES (2-Y-O; £1,392; 6f) (13)

GOING: STANDARD

8.00 VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
1. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
2. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
3. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
4. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
5. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
6. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
7. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
8. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
9. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
10. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
11. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
12. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)
13. VALLEY PADDOCKS RACING FAT BOYS ON TOUR HANDICAP (25.90; 6f) (13)

GOING: STANDARD

2.00 BROUGHTON ALES AMATEUR RIDERS NOVICES HURDLE (21.98; 2m 11yds) (9 runners)
1. BROUGHTON ALES AMATEUR RIDERS NOVICES HURDLE (21.98; 2m 11yds) (9 runners)
2. BROUGHTON ALES AMATEUR RIDERS NOVICES HURDLE (21.98; 2m 11yds) (9 runners)
3. BROUGHTON ALES AMATEUR RIDERS NOVICES HURDLE (21.98; 2m 11yds) (9 runners)
4. BROUGHTON ALES AMATEUR RIDERS NOVICES HURDLE (21.98; 2m 11yds) (9 runners)
5. BROUGHTON ALES AMATEUR RIDERS NOVICES HURDLE (21.98; 2m 11yds) (9 runners)
6. BROUGHTON ALES AMATEUR RIDERS NOVICES HURDLE (21.98; 2m 11yds) (9 runners)
7. BROUGHTON ALES AMATEUR RIDERS NOVICES HURDLE (21.98; 2m 11yds) (9 runners)
8. BROUGHTON ALES AMATEUR RIDERS NOVICES HURDLE (21.98; 2m 11yds) (9 runners)
9. BROUGHTON ALES AMATEUR RIDERS NOVICES HURDLE (21.98; 2m 11yds) (9 runners)

GOING: STANDARD

2.40 EXTRAORDINARY MARGARET FLEMING MEMORIAL NOVICES CHASE (22.84; 3m 1f) (7)
1. EXTRAORDINARY MARGARET FLEMING MEMORIAL NOVICES CHASE (22.84; 3m 1f) (7)
2. EXTRAORDINARY MARGARET FLEMING MEMORIAL NOVICES CHASE (22.84; 3m 1f) (7)
3. EXTRAORDINARY MARGARET FLEMING MEMORIAL NOVICES CHASE (22.84; 3m 1f) (7)
4. EXTRAORDINARY MARGARET FLEMING MEMORIAL NOVICES CHASE (22.84; 3m 1f) (7)
5. EXTRAORDINARY MARGARET FLEMING MEMORIAL NOVICES CHASE (22.84; 3m 1f) (7)
6. EXTRAORDINARY MARGARET FLEMING MEMORIAL NOVICES CHASE (22.84; 3m 1f) (7)
7. EXTRAORDINARY MARGARET FLEMING MEMORIAL NOVICES CHASE (22.84; 3m 1f) (7)

GOING: STANDARD

3.10 KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
1. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
2. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
3. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
4. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
5. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
6. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
7. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
8. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
9. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
10. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
11. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
12. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
13. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)
14. KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS NOVICES HURDLE (22.41; 2m 11yds) (14)

NEWCASTLE

8.00 Waypoint. 8.30 Malcoza. 9.00 State Of Caution. 9.30 Legal Issue. 10.00 Pink Ticket. 10.30 Classic Ballet.

GOING: STANDARD

8.30 OXON HANDICAP (22.07; 1m 10yds) (13)
1. OXON HANDICAP (22.07; 1m 10yds) (13)
2. OXON HANDICAP (22.07; 1m 10yds) (13)
3. OXON HANDICAP (22.07; 1m 10yds) (13)
4. OXON HANDICAP (22.07; 1m 10yds) (13)
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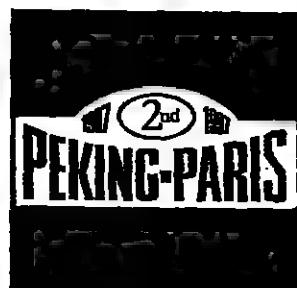
People
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Page 47



Bikers
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Page 49



Rally
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SATURDAY OCTOBER 18 1997

Designers with women trouble

Why is the car
industry still
closed to female
creative skills,
Vaughan
Freeman asks

Charlotte Schiffer is a woman in a man's world, one of the very few women to have broken into the traditionally male-dominated enclave of automobile design.

Women buy almost half the new cars in Britain and influence the purchase of millions more, yet just two students in the 30-year history of the Royal College of Art's highly regarded transport design course have been women. Charlotte is one of them.

The problem is not just confined to Britain. From Korea to California, Coventry to Cologne, the world's car-design studios are still effectively male ghettos, even though motor manufacturers are crying out for new women designers.

The problem, it seems, is that women are simply not signing up to courses such as the postgraduate one that Charlotte, 27, is on at the Royal College, having moved there from the equally woman-free Coventry University transport design course, where she was also a groundbreaker.

It is not as if Charlotte, from Germany, does not understand cars in the flesh, as well as on paper: vehicles she has owned include two Trabants, a Mini, a Seventies Mercedes and the Peugeot 405 that she is currently restoring. But the lack of women in the industry mystifies her. "I cannot explain this at all, it is really strange, but it is the same in Germany," she says.

When I came to study at Coventry I went into the room on the first day and realised I was the only woman there. Until then, I had not realised that it was such a male-dominated job and that there were no women there.

"I am surprised because it is an artistic job. Designing car exteriors you are involved in three-dimensional sculpture and you have a great opportunity to put it into a producible shape. That is what inspires me and is wonderful to me."

"You are not involved in what might frighten women off, the idea of engineering. It is not a problem, you get a lot of attention and sometimes that is good, sometimes it is bad."

"It will change though, it is going to come and there are going to be more women designers in the future."

There are women designers, but usually found in the "female" domain of the vehicle's interior, colour, trim and upholstery, not the metal-



Charlotte Schiffer, one of the only two women to join the Royal College of Art's leading transport design course in its 30-year history: "I am surprised, because it is such an artistic job," she says

shaping world of exterior design, styling a car's shape.

Ken Greenley, transportation design course director at the Royal College, says: "I am not sure a good woman designer will do the job any better than a male designer. There is no reason why a Barbara Hepworth car could not match a Henry Moore car. A woman would do it equally well, but in a different way."

He believes the lack of female interest is partly cultural: "We have now got two women designers on our course, the first women on the course in its 30-year history."

"We get lots and lots of inquiries from fathers saying their sons want to be a car designer or that they want their sons to be a car designer." Few parents call up to proffer their daughters.

Because the Royal College does not take anyone until

they are 21, he says women interested in car design when younger tend to get sidetracked into other areas, something he believes car-mad men might more effectively resist.

"Many women go into design schools and get taken away from automotive design and end up designing hospital beds or something," he says.

"When I was studying, I was asked why I was bothering wasting my time designing cars, and why wasn't I designing washing machines. But I quite like getting up in the morning and designing cars."

"This is not just an English phenomenon. There are not many women involved generally, other than token roles in colour and in trim. But why should a woman be better at colour and trim than a man? An element of it might be that men make the judgments. It is a sexist industry."

David Browne, programme manager at Coventry University's School of Art and Design, says the faculty has tried new approaches to women: "Car manufacturers are very aware that women are major purchasers of their products, and are crying out for good female designers."

So where are all the women applicants? "We did some research into why we had so few female applicants. We acknowledged that the word 'industrial' in the course title conjured up all sorts of nasty images of dirty, noisy factories, that was putting women off," Browne says.

The word industrial was expunged, but still the women failed to come. Browne says one obstacle to having more women car designers is a classic Catch-22 dilemma:

"List ten leading designers of cars and you will probably come up with ten men's names."

"There is no female role model, no shining beacon saying 'become a female car designer and you can be successful, travel the world and make a lot of money'."

For interested women though, he gives warning that being female is not enough to ensure success: "The tendency is for women to be shoved into the stereotypical colour and trim corner, the 'kitchen' of the automotive industry."

He adds: "There seems to be an assumption that women have some kind of in-built skill in this area, but why should they? It is not enough to be a woman designer. You have to be a good woman designer. There is no point having a woman on your team who designs exactly like a man."



Schiffer says women may be put off by the belief that the job involves engineering

The 100mpg Ka you can't afford to run

It sips fuel and slips through the air.

Kevin Eason on an abstemious achiever

You might never have to stop at a filling station again... but the journey would be impossibly dull and never-ending. Engineers at Ford's Dunton test centre in Essex have proved that the 100mpg car is possible. They have also ascertained, however, that it will cost too much to attract the average buyer, no matter how thrifty, and it needs some co-sinistering to achieve the highest economy figures.

The Ka Step1 — at the London Motor Show at Earls Court this week — is based on the familiar if futuristically shaped road car, but it comes equipped with a bundle of

innovations to achieve the magical 100mpg mark.

The bodywork is made from ultra-lightweight, steel while the doors, boot lid, bonnet and even the dashboard are all high-strength carbon fibre of the sort used to turn Formula One cars into crash-proof missiles. Suspension parts, rear axle and brakes are aluminium to lighten the load further.

The result is a Ka that is 160kg lighter than its production equivalent, while aerodynamic carbon-fibre fairings allow the little car to cut through the air 20 per cent more efficiently. The structure runs on "skinny" low-resistance tyres.



Tony Blair tries the car that cuts emissions, but the carbon-fibre bodywork demands too much time and money to manufacture

Under the bonnet, the engine is new, if not revolutionary: a three-cylinder, 12-valve turbocharged diesel worth 60bhp, about the same as the current car.

But the package means huge fuel savings of the sort that would delight the parsimonious — or particularly a Prime Minister pledged to bringing about reductions in carbon dioxide emissions. Tony Blair took a seat in the thrifty Ka at the Motor Show this week and was mightily impressed at the

figures thrown at him by Ford executives.

Roy Horrocks, the senior technical specialist in charge of the project, reckons 91 miles to the gallon is a good average for the car though it has been tested at 162mpg... but testers had to drive in a straight line in fourth gear and at a constant 35mph to achieve that seemingly miraculous figure.

Even if Mr Blair was taken with the Ka's performance, he shouldn't bother to form his plans for the

future of transport around technology this exotic.

Ford executives say that they could make the fuel-efficient Ka tomorrow but the carbon-fibre bits and pieces are five times more expensive as conventional steel, and take up to two days to "cure" into shape, which would mean massive delays on assembly lines designed to churn out 200,000 KAs a year at the moment.

Until somebody figures out how to translate some clever technology

into workaday production, then the 100mpg Ka will have to remain a dream — and we will all have to keep on spending more than we like at the filling station.

But that is not to say that other manufacturers at the show are trying to make inroads into fuel consumption. Direct-injection of engines has long been a target for carmakers. The theory is well known, but manufacturers around the world have been struggling for years to get it right.

Mitsubishi says that it has been working on the system since 1967, and next month will put it on the European market for the first time, christened Gasoline Direct Injection (GDI), in their Carisma saloons and hatchbacks.

With GDI, fuel and air are mixed inside the cylinder as one event instead of being swirled together outside and sucked in through an intake valve. There is a good deal more to it than that, achieving smooth combustion and low emissions from a lean-burn mixture has proved difficult.

But the Japanese maker says the engine it has designed radically to overcome such problems now approaches diesel levels of economy, produces greater power and creates emissions that are about 20 per cent cleaner than those of a conventional petrol engine.

The downside is that the GDI Carisma costs £200 more than a regular petrol version. "But an average driver covering about 10,000 miles a year would see that back in fuel savings after about 12 months," says Mitsubishi's UK GDI expert, Alan Rooke.

"The GDI is no noisier than an ordinary petrol engine. I believe that within ten years the whole market will adopt the technology and that eventually it will kill off diesel cars."



Drivers need reminding of the number of lives they can be responsible for in a people-mover: new driving licence rules almost do the job

Am I in an MPV or a number 73?

The rising popularity of the multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) has been one of the more significant trends of the past few years, and the usefulness of the one I drive suggests that this popularity will continue. I do not think the trend is a fad or a fashion, in the way that explains the popularity of four-wheel-drives in Kensington High Street, but so many labels have now been attached to vehicles that confusion is all about.

Time was you either had a car or you didn't. If you had a car you drove and if you didn't you caught the bus or walked, unless of course you had a van or a lorry. Or a motorbike and sidecar, a splendid device that has now all but vanished save for Wallace and Gromit and the Two Fat Ladies.

More leisure has meant more



Peter Barnard

types of vehicle to the point where some of them seem to overlap. What exactly is the difference, for example, between an MPV and a people-carrier? Is there a difference or are the names interchangeable? Does the difference reveal itself only when one changes the

number of seats in an MPV? Mine has five but will take seven. Perhaps it is an MPV with five and a people-carrier with seven.

This is serious stuff. A lump comes to the throat at the thought of a vehicle sitting outside my house all through the dark, damp night, gently rocking in the wind and going through an identity crisis. Well, how would you like it?

I will admit that driving an MPV has its drawbacks. You would not want to try any Formula One cornering, for instance, because your average MPV rolls like a Newlyn trawler. There is also the problem of insurance, as bus stops who put their hands out when I come along. Very amusing. I had thought of installing a ticket machine and buying a peaked cap, but this would only arouse suspicion: a properly dressed bus driver



with a cap would stand out a mile these days.

Browsing through the pamphlet that arrived with a renewed driving licence this week gave pause for more serious thoughts. Actually, it gave cause for a small cheer, for I see that from next January the entitlement of ordinary mortals with ordinary driving licences to

get behind the wheel of a minibus will come in for more rigorous inquiry. And about time too. We may look like bus drivers in our MPVs but in reality we are no more qualified to carry large numbers of passengers than we are to drive a lorry.

At present car drivers who first held a licence before January 1 this

year can drive a minibus, provided they are over 21 and the minibus cannot carry more than 16 passengers and the bus is not being used for hire or reward. To drive a minibus carrying more than eight passengers for hire or reward requires a passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) entitlement which in turn requires higher medical stan-

dards and a further driving test. Those rulings, incidentally, explain why MPVs and people-movers tend to have no more than seven seats.

The change in January will mean that anyone wishing to drive a minibus, even if it is not for hire or reward, will have to meet more stringent medical requirements. No doubt this is a nuisance for youth leaders and others doing important community work but several fatal accidents involving minibuses in the past few years have made some sort of tightening up inevitable.

What I find slightly odd is that the change applies only to people either gaining a licence for the first time after next January or renewing one after that date. Surely most people already have licences that last until they are 70 years old, so the change to a safer procedure is going to be of limited benefit.

The new rules do, however, serve as a reminder that the capacity of MPVs, though limited to seven, does give the driver something to think about. An MPV is perfect for school runs, but six children inside a vehicle not much smaller than a minibus constitutes quite a responsibility.

AC's latest: not quite true Brit

Kevin Eason on the new Ace

It looks like the latest bespoke English sports model, the epitome of wood and leather luxury contained in long, sleek bodywork from Britain's oldest surviving carmaker. But the Ace from AC, founded in 1901, probably helps to symbolise the surrender of the nation's heritage to foreign control.

Now owned by a company listed on the American stock market with a South African chairman, the Ace is engineered by a Swede and will have engines and gearboxes supplied from America, bodywork from South Africa — even Japanese tyres.

The Ace almost sums up the recent history of the once-proud British motor industry. Visitors to the London Motor Show at Earls Court next week will see lines of foreign cars, with wholly-owned British companies confined to small, often family-owned businesses making sports cars, such as Morgan, TVR and Marcos.

AC, now based at Brooklands in Weybridge, Surrey, was taken over by Ford ten years ago but bought back by

entrepreneur Brian Angliss in 1992 with plans to manufacture the Ace as an elegant English sports car.

His plans fell apart last year when the company went into receivership. It was rescued by Pride Automotive Group, a leasing company based in this country but listed on the Nasdaq stock market in the USA, who bought it for an estimated £5 million.

Chairman Alan Lubinsky brought in Jan-Erik Jansson from Volvo to re-engineer and restyle the Ace ready to unveil at this year's motor show.

Costing £75,000, AC plans to make at peak just 500 cars a



Ace certainly looks the part, with its sleek body and bespoke wood and leather trim

year but still believes it can challenge models from two of Britain's best-known manufacturers: the XK8 from Jaguar and DB7 from Aston Martin — and they are both controlled by Ford in the US.

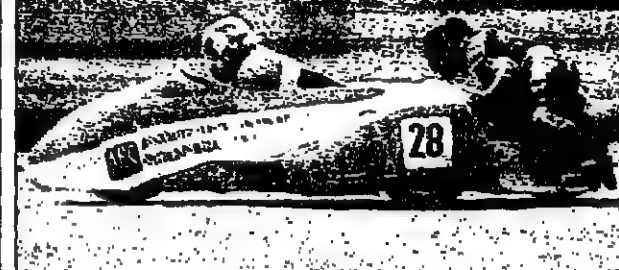
The Ace's Ford 5-litre V8 gives 310bhp, enough to fire the car — bodied with South

African aluminium — from rest to 60mph in 5.7 seconds and on to 155mph, rolling on Yokohama tyres.

But buyers with that sort of money will look long and hard at a car with minimal interior space, a boot barely big enough for a set of golf clubs, and switchgear that features

in Fords from the Mondeo to the Scorpio.

AC's Brooklands HQ will continue to make a modern version of the celebrated Cobra supercar, though bizarrely that is to be renamed the Superblower, while the Ace will be assembled in Coventry by MGA Developments.



Suzuki's 1984 Formula One sidecar outfit — on display

A MAJOR motorcycle exhibition opens on Monday at Coventry's Museum of British Road Transport — and to celebrate, the museum is offering a book review to *Times* readers. The exhibition, running until November 2, features historic racers, and modern scorers from Suzuki (above), Honda and Yamaha. There will also be a strong BMW presence, and the museum is offering a copy of *BMW Motorcycles: The Complete Story* to the first reader to answer this question correctly: what is the name of BMW's new "custom" rival to Harley-Davidson? Send replies to *Times* Go Competition, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Normal competition rules apply.

YOU WILL believe a Honda can fly: the carmaker has designed the world's first all-composite small jet aircraft using Formula One technology. Powered by two jets, the MHO2 experimental six-seater uses lightweight carbon-fibre material common in F1 car bodyshells. It has a top speed of 353 knots.

MG

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MOTORBIKES

ULTIMATE EAST RIDER
V15.5 125cc, 1997 model, only 400 miles, black chrome, looks like a Harley, comes with 1/2 tank, 1/2 gear, 1/2 seat.

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Final dash for France

Finished: Lord Montagu of Beaulieu hits the last leg of the Peking to Paris rally

When you read this, the grand climax of the Peking to Paris Challenge will be taking place, when more than 80 arriving cars from the original 96 that started from the Great Wall of China last month will roll across the abutments of the face de la anconore, exactly where Prince Borghese finished his race 90 years ago to win a pile of champagne.

Our last week started with a scintillating dash across Turkey, with just one rest day in Istanbul for final-fitting before leaving for Greece. We were held up crossing the Siphon Bridge, when one of our cars burst into flames, perhaps through over-enthusiasm at the prospect of entering Europe, but the fire was quickly extinguished.

Turkey saw new half-shafts for the Jaguar MKVII and tyres for several competitors, and some of the stretchers called in for a final check-up. Several days, these included David Arrigo in the Allard,



Rare break for Francesca Sternberg (left) and Jennifer Gillies. Despite trouble with their Volvo, they expect to make Paris

and the big Railton saloon of Jonathan Prior. The Morris Minor went off for an overnight engine strip-down and had four new pistons fitted before breakfast.

Greece saw some remarkable mountain conditions and the first rain since China. We drove hard over dirt roads used for the classic Acropolis rally and reached the ferry at Patras with no changes to the main leader board, despite there being many more time checkpoints — which was not what we all expected.

After a good rest on board,

we faced a final 1,000km course up through Italy, with lunch at the Ferrari factory and an overnight halt beside the Italian Alps. We then faced forecasts of snow on the Arlberg Pass — a great contrast from the dust and heat of Pakistan's Fort Munro or the deserts of Iran.

Today sees us drive out of the champagne capital of Reims for a short morning's drive into Paris, where we regroup and form a celebratory convoy into central Paris for the finish line.

Everyone feels a great sense

of achievement and of overcoming odds that would have defeated most people under normal circumstances. We have driven against the clock halfway round the globe, on the longest rally organised since the first event in 1907.

The great motive was to keep going, and after the sad demise of my own Vauxhall within days of the start in China, I have been forced to hitch rides in 14 different vehicles in order to bring you these regular dispatches, until

Rimini in Italy when I was able finally to meet with my own Blower Bentley from Beaulieu so that I could at least complete the final part of the course in my own car.

When I look back, there have been many moments of personal adversity, and quite a few occasions of great pain — for instance, Mick Flick, the Mercedes-Benz heir, had a tooth pulled using pliers from his car's toolkit while camping at the foot of Mount Everest.

Also at Everest, American driver Don Jones's kitbag was lifted by a light-fingered shepherd boy; the larger-than-life competitor not only lost his credit cards but also his driving licence, passport and carnet for customs clearances.

Don pushed his 600 frame at border officials most persuasively. On the Iran/Iraq border, facing final defeat from a stubborn official, he burst into *I Left My Heart in San Francisco*. With that, and a round of applause, he was waved through the border.

Prince Borghese and his pioneers, if they are looking down on all of this, must be feeling very proud of all these mighty achievements.

John Naish thought he could ride, until he tried racetracks

Right, I'll show you the lines, where to brake, where to turn, where to apex the bend and where to set yourself up for the next one," the instructor said. "We'll take it slowly to begin with."

Then he wheeled out of the pit lane and shot away, leaving me flailing in his wake. The wide, easy ribbon of tarmac that is Brands Hatch to the spectator transformed into the nightmare tangle of strange curbs and cambers that is Brands Hatch to the wannabe speed king.

That was lesson one at the Yamaha Race School: you can watch people compete, you can learn theory from a blackboard, or even play the computer game... but doing it is something entirely different.

This is motorcycling at its most elemental. Everything about it says: "You're in a different league now, sonny."

Despite the fact that riding on the hallowed ground of Britain's racetracks quickly proves your near-zero Barry Sheene potential, the experience is becoming ever more popular with race fans, riders wishing to sharpen their road skills and owners of production bikes too powerful to be opened up on the street.

There are two ways on to the track — you can enrol with a race school, such as Yamaha's, where seasoned racers take you roaring round the course on stripped-down 600cc Thundercats — or you can take your own bike to the limit on one of the increasing number of track days held around the country.

The Yamaha school session begins with a briefing about

What's keeping bikers off the streets?

the circuit, the turning points, safety and etiquette. Great stress is placed on the fundamental philosophy of fast riding — smoothness is all; get the basics right, then start speeding up.

But logic evaporates when confronted with the cruelly vast horizons of a racetrack. All normally skilled humans should expect to make a batch of it on the first session.

The learning comes fast, with the instructors coaching over a radio link until, at fleeting points, the gear-changes, acceleration, braking and cornering begin to come thrillingly together — until you meet it up at the next section. And then you want to go round again — faster.

Most track days offer briefings too — though it is up to riders how much advice they take. Jamie Whitlam, who raced for Suzuki in this year's World Superbike championship, is part of the Speed Freak teaching team that organises days at circuits such as Brands, Donington and Snetterton for up to 70 riders.

who pick their competence levels and take to the track with like-minded groups — from tourists to racers.

The power of modern sportsbikes means that anyone with a machine over 400cc can't use the engine fully on public roads," Whitlam says.

Track days are a great way for people to learn to control their bikes to the full, making them safer road riders."

They are also becoming an obsession for a growing band who would rather leave their superbikes in the garage than ride on Britain's streets.

Ken Leighton Ankers, 50, a jeweller from Reading who went on 17 track days this year, says his £11,000 Ducati 748 is too single-minded for urban riding. "If you're not nailing it, the suspension is rock-hard, the seating position torture and the engine too powerful. The track is where it belongs."

He has attended two race schools, and done the other thing that comes with a lot of track riding — fallen off. "I crashed on my first track day, when I ran out of road and went over the handlebars — but I got away with bruised pride and scratched paintwork," he says.

"It's such a terrific feeling when you get on the right line and everything starts to flow. I'm going to cut it down next year, though — maybe to just two track days a month."

Yamaha Race School runs courses at Brands Hatch, Kent, and Cadwell Park, Lincs. Tel: 01507 343 555. Speed Freak: 0181 487 2222

AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans

PRINCE BORGHESI, VICTOR OF THE 1907 Peking-Paris Marathon, WAS RESCUED BY MARRIAGES TO NAPOLION...

DURING THE RACE, HIS CO-DRIVER LUIGI BARTINI SENT THE FIRST EVER TELEGRAM FROM THE Gobi Desert.

HE ARRIVED IN PARIS THREE WEEKS AHEAD OF HIS RIVAL, HIS 40th BIRTHDAY BEING CELEBRATED PART OF THE WAY BY A VISIT TO THE Gobi Desert.

FIFTY YEARS LATER WHEN BARTINI'S SON ATTEMPTED TO REPEAT THE JOURNEY WITH HELP FROM FIAT, THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES REFUSED TO GRANT PERMISSION.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PHILIPPE PARS



Someone here has the right line: riders take their bikes on a Speed Freak track day

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+18.83	3.87	Acum
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Days of Rain (X)	Days of Sunshine (Y)
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2	8
3	7
4	6
5	5
6	4
7	3
8	2
9	1
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THE POORER SEX 62

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WEEKEND MONEY

GAME PLANS 52

Injury time guidance for amateurs



Can you really have your cake and eat it?

Marianne Curphey asks whether guaranteed equity bonds deliver the performance they promise to risk-averse investors

Lottery winners love them, building societies and banks keep launching them, but do guaranteed equity bonds really deliver the performance they promise? These bonds protect your capital and offer the tempting prospect of big gains on the equity markets to boot. However, some in the industry dismiss them as the investment equivalent of trying to have your cake and eat it.

Their drawback, according to James Higgins of the independent financial advisers Chamberlain de Broe, is that they are a hybrid. They are not adventurous enough to make you much money over five years, but are less flexible than an ordinary building society account.

In addition, the Personal Investment Authority (PIA), the industry watchdog, has looked at the way they are sold and believes that promotional literature and documents should be tightened up to make it clear that some involve risk to capital. The PIA was also concerned that investors might have been encouraged to believe they would earn better returns.

Guaranteed equity bonds were launched five years ago and are sold mainly to building society investors who are risk-averse and worry that they might lose money if they invest in the stock market.

Their concept is simple: you hand over a lump sum, and the company promises to hand it back after five years. The company also promises to give you a bit extra if the stock markets rise during that time. Typically, you might be promised your capital back plus 100 per cent of the stock market rise plus a 20 per cent bonus over five years.

But Mr Higgins says investors would be better off going for a guaranteed index-tracking fund if they are looking for a low-risk way of buying into the stock market. He says: "Guaranteed equity bonds tend to be sold to very cautious investors, who are worried about the vagaries of share prices. I cannot recommend them wholeheartedly, because I believe if you are willing to lock your money up for five years you should buy an index-tracker and have the discipline to sit tight during any falls in the market."

Other IFAs are even less complimentary. Mark Dampier, of Churchill Investments, says: "They are a lazy person's product: for people who want an investment to do everything for them. They do offer a slightly better return than ordinary build-

ing society accounts, but they are not particularly good value."

There are two types of guaranteed equity bonds. One offers growth, so that you get your capital back, plus a bonus based on the performance of the stock market. The second type offers a regular income but no guarantee that your original capital will be returned. Ian Millward, of Chase de Vere, says the bonds are suitable for "investors who want security". But he adds: "You need to take into account what returns your money could be making over those five years if it were invested elsewhere."

They are not tax-efficient, particularly for higher-rate taxpayers. The returns at the end of the five-year period are paid net of basic rate tax. Non-taxpayers cannot reclaim this. However, people who pay tax at the highest rate will need to pay extra tax on this investment at the end of the bond's life.

As an alternative, Mr Millward prefers the HSBC International Pep Plus, which invests in the UK, European and Far Eastern markets and will give you a return of 100 per cent of any growth. In addition, it gives you a 20 per cent bonus at the end, plus it is enclosed in a tax-free Pep wrapper.

Alistair Fraser, marketing director of HSBC Asset Management, said the Pep's funds were split equally between the UK, Europe and Asia. The closing date for the current issue is November 6. "At the end of five-and-a-half years your capital is secure, and you get all the growth in the stock markets, plus a 20 per cent bonus. We put this in a Pep to make the proceeds tax-free."

He says the advantage of the product is that people who feel the market in the UK is too high can still invest, knowing that their portfolio is diversified but that the shares still qualify for both a single and a general company Pep.

Mark Dampier prefers the Prolific

Objective Limited Risk Equity Unit Trust and the UK Safeguard Fund from fund manager John Govett. He says: "With these you can sell whenever you like so they are very flexible. The UK Safeguard Fund locks in the growth each quarter, and even if the market goes down you can only lose 5 per cent per quarter. That means the very worst you could lose is 20 per cent in any one year. The only time the market has consistently gone down each quarter was in 1973."

Charles Pinder, director of savings and investments with Abbey National, says guaranteed equity bonds are extremely popular and issues sell out quickly.

He said: "The advantage for investors, particularly at a time when markets are looking as though they may fall, is that some of these bonds lock in any gains made. This means you will not lose any money, although if the markets perform badly you would only get your capital back. It is a simple formula that people understand: if the stock market does well, you receive a proportion of its growth. If it falls, you have not lost your capital."

At present, Abbey National does not have a guaranteed equity bond issue. It is planning to launch one next month. However, it does have a tax-exempt special savings account (Tessa) which is linked to the markets in London and New York and locks in gains every month.

Mr Pinder said: "Over a five-year term, if there is growth in the London and New York markets, our Tessa investors get 1.15 per cent per month. This is locked in."

Bristol & West began offering guaranteed equity bonds five years ago. Last month it launched a new "global" equity-linked account. Savers will receive returns based on the average growth of the FTSE 100 index, the S&P 500 index (an index of 500 major US companies) and the Nikkei 200 index (an index of 200 major Japanese companies). Simon Pratt, group product manager (investments) of Bristol & West, said that some investment analysts believed the FTSE 100 still had opportunity for further growth and that now could be the right time to invest in Japan.

Halifax has a Guaranteed Investment Bond which closes on November 9 and requires a minimum investment of £5,000. Returns are based on the growth of the FTSE 100 index.

Lazybones: some advisers believe that guaranteed equity bonds are for people who want an investment to do everything

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EAGLE STAR



One jump ahead: American athlete Mike Powell can be sure of the best treatment, but uninsured amateurs could pay a heavy price if they suffer a sporting injury

Sports insurance is not just for professionals, says Clare Fullerton

With the football season in full swing, millions of amateurs and professionals are putting their limbs and livelihoods at risk on the pitch. This week Ian Knight, the former Sheffield Wednesday striker, settled out of court for a tackle which fractured his leg in several places and ended his career ten years ago.

Amateur footballers may have less at stake when they take the field this weekend, but they are far from immune to injury and its costs. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) says there are 29 million sporting injuries every year, resulting in the loss of 11 million working days. Yet many amateur sportsmen have no insurance cover.

"There is a high degree of under-insurance among amateur sportsmen," said Malcolm Tarling of the ABI. "A lot of people do not appreciate the risks involved in sport and they are not aware of the costs an injury can cause."

Mr Tarling says that individuals should make sure that they are insured before participating in any sport which involves taking risks. "Insurance may be needed to cover specialist medical treatment or physiotherapy,

potential loss of earnings, life insurance and legal costs. The latter can be high if a sportsman is sued for causing an injury.

Some, or even all of these requirements may be covered by existing arrangements, and the first step is to check whether this is the case. The NHS may be relied upon for most medical needs, and if you have a full-time job your employer should provide sick pay in the event of an accident. Legal costs are sometimes covered by household contents policies, and you may already have life cover or a personal accident policy.

However, you may well find holes in your protection. The more dangerous the sport, the more likely this is, according to Julian Hicks of the specialist sports insurance company Sportscover Direct. He says:

"High-risk sports like mountaineering are excluded from most personal accident policies, and a surprising number also exclude rugby players or footballers. People really do need to check."

Specialist companies will insure against almost any sporting risk, says David Stirling of Crispin Speers & Partners. "There are no recognised sports which we will not insure," he said. "For the most adventurous sports we will tailor-make policies, and we have even insured people who are trying to break world records."

Like many sports insurers, Crispin Speers & Partners sells most of its policies under one of three risk ratings. The lowest risk category includes fishing, cycling and tennis. The medium rating includes football, hockey

and yachting, while boxing, rugby and mountaineering are in the highest risk category.

In each case the policy is sold in annual premium units priced at £100 each. With a low-risk sport the payouts range from £100 per week for temporary incapacity to £50,000 for permanent disablement. However, with a high-risk sport the weekly provision is just £50 and the payment for permanent disablement a mere £20,000.

Up to ten units may be purchased, so maximum cover costing £1,000 would buy £200,000 compensation if you were disabled as a result of taking part in a dangerous sport.

With Sportscover Direct the maximum risk cover provides up to £10,000 for permanent

disability, £3 million if you are sued for causing an injury, and £1,500 for legal fees. Premiums vary according to the sports. Cover for the most dangerous sports, such as hang-gliding and paragliding, costs £7.50 a year.

A cheaper way of obtaining cover may be to buy a team insurance policy, available from most sports insurers. One company, J Webster & Co, offers a policy designed for football teams. Under its terms, the maximum cover costs £520 per year, which becomes relatively inexpensive when divided between the entire squad of players. However, the weekly sum paid to an injured player unable to work is just £50 per week, and even for death or loss of limb the payout is only £5,000.

The only way to obtain a thoroughly good deal on sporting injury protection, it seems, may be to give up sport altogether. For those who do not want to take this step, Sportscover Direct can be contacted on 01179-226 222, Crispin Speers & Partners on 0171-480 5083, and J Webster & Co on 01254-661 511. Other specialists in sports insurance include Amisport (0171-721 8656) and Broadstone Insurance (01302-696 166).

Crash, bang and historical wallop

Anniversaries of financial crashes are an easy excuse to raise the question: could it happen again? Those who worked through the October 1987 stock market crash remember how frightening it was, made to seem more apocalyptic by the crashing of millions of trees and the power and telephone systems of southern England as overture. For investors, raising the spectre of 1987 is a bit like watching Jews on a bathing holiday. One decade on, however, and there are enough similarities between the booms of then and now to take a serious look.

Share prices are up nearly 30 per cent this year, far more than optimists hoped. Pessimists thought shares had raced ahead of their trend, so 1997 would be a down year when money was only to be made by buying the right stocks. Profits are rated historically high on both sides of the Atlantic. The ratio of share price to earnings averages 20 in London and 26 in New York. You only expect to see that at the start of an economic recovery, when profits have fallen low but hopes are high. London dividend yields average 3.5 per cent before tax, less than at any time except the 1972 peak (followed by the worst postwar bear market) and in 1987. New York's average 1.6 per cent is much lower than in 1972 or 1987. Signs of excess can be seen in a rash of big deals involving BT, Guinness, Grand Met, BAT, T&N, Redland and WH Smith. Perhaps boards know they cannot deliver the growth implied by share ratings from trading. Low inflation cuts two ways.

By past standards, shares are plainly overvalued. But are we in a changed era? The big difference is that sound monetary policies have brought inflation under control all round the developed world. Save in Japan, this is allowing unusually steady growth. Bond prices are rising this year; in 1987 they turned down months before shares peaked. Money costs less, making financial assets worth more.

US economic management has become smarter. Alan Greenspan, who heads the Federal Reserve, has not followed the book. After berating overheated markets, he adjusted subtly to evidence that competition and non-stop productivity gains can keep growth going without inflation. That remains his stance, but he

reminded markets that Utopia is not yet with us, thereby laying the ground for a rise in money rates.

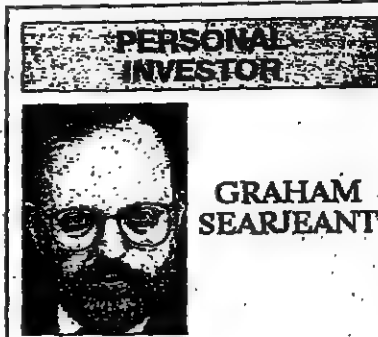
Contrary to mythology, crashes do not come out of clear blue sky. In 1929 American industrial output sagged months before the crash. In 1987 currency turmoil raged and all main interest rates were rising. 1997 has already seen crashes in Asian "tiger" nations, but they were late frenzies after long declines, except in otherwise healthy Hong Kong.

Germany and The Netherlands are worrying too. The bull psychology, which uses setbacks as a chance to buy, seems to have given way to the bear tack, which sees recovery as a chance to cash in, making the market's momentum negative. German interest rates have started their rise to a euro convergence reckoned to be nearer 4.5 per cent than its 3.3 per cent repo rate. Continental funds do not look promising. London and New York faltered in holiday August when key companies issued profit warnings in New York and bulls fought bears in thin but volatile trading.

The buyers won, supporting the market at about 8 per cent below today's prices. The force is still with them. London has an attractive 7 per cent cash alternative. But bond yields, though unlikely to fall much further, need to turn up before shares turn sour and start falling to regain their peak.

This process could take many months, less if takeovers give way to more profit warnings like IBM's in 1987. But do not expect a straight repeat. We learnt from 1929 how to stop a crash, creating economic havoc. We learnt from 1987 that a 30 per cent fall may only be an adjustment and we recall that the FTSE 100 ended that year up 2 per cent. Economic prospects are healthier today and investors would know better than to let prices fall anything like as far. Once many lose faith in share values, traders might welcome a break of up to 15 per cent if it squeezed a bear market into a month.

That is still worth avoiding if you reckon your feet are "flea", your nerves good and your dealing costs low. Most investors will prefer to sit tight. You can be pretty sure of one thing. In the past two years, the index has beaten most portfolios because it has been driven by a minority of financial shares. In 1998, choosing stocks looks a better hope than an index-tracking fund.



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SOURCE: NICKELSON. BUY TO HOLD BASIS WITH NET INCOME REINVESTED OVER PERIODS TO 1 JULY 1997. LATEST DATA: INTERNATIONAL GROWTH - 10/25/97; INTERNATIONAL INCOME - 11/29/97; GLOBAL GROWTH PEP - 11/29/97; JAPAN - 1/18/98; NORTH AMERICA - 1/18/98; FAR EAST - 1/18/98.

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WOOLWICH
DIRECT

Caroline Merrell and Clare Stewart on latest attempts to prevent carpetbaggers from taking control

Nationwide welcomes small investors back into the fold

NATIONWIDE, the largest building society, reopened its doors to small savers this week by dropping the minimum opening balance from £5,000 to £1. Nationwide is now offering a rate of 6.7 per cent on balances of £1 on its instant access savings account. However, if new savers want to join the society they will now have to promise to give any windfall they may receive from a conversion or takeover to a charity. Brian Davis, chief executive, claims that this will ensure that everyone, regardless of how much they invest, has access to the best savings rates.

However, some observers believe that in doing this Mr Davis reduces the risk of the society being forced to convert by carpetbaggers. Earlier this year, Nationwide defeated an attempt by Michael Hardern, a freelance butler, and other members in favour of conversion to win places on the board. The vote was three to one against. The initiative to keep out carpetbaggers should ensure that another attempt is not successful. A second challenge to the society is being

mounted by Andrew Muir, a financial recruitment consultant from Slough. He wants a place on the board of Nationwide to force it to give more of its profits back to members.

Nationwide's bonus account pays 7.2 per cent gross, while its InvestDirect pays 6.7 per cent, one of the highest rates on the high street.

Higher rates definitely prove to be a draw for savers. So much so, that some of the new supermarket banks are finding it difficult to deal with demand. Sainsbury and Tesco both report strong interest from customers. Sainsbury says that 12,000 customers a week are signing up to its range of services, spanning telephone banking and mortgages.

Arguably, these services have been too successful, leading to some problems for the supermarkets and their financial partners. One Times reader,

for example, reports difficulty in opening a deposit account at his local Sainsbury's store, with the supermarket rather keener to lend than to add further to its healthy cash pile.

Tesco launched its instant account offering an interest rate of 6.5 per cent on September 29, and Derek Sach, chief executive of Tesco Personal Finance, said: "There has been a huge response," but he adds, "processing applications has been slower than we would ideally like".

One would-be Tesco bank customer says that he was told that it could take seven weeks to process applications because of the heavy demand. Arthur Harada, of Chester, sent two substantial cheques with his completed application form to open a Tesco instant access account.

Mr Harada was unhappy that nearly three weeks later he was still

waiting for his account card, although it had been sent out by Tesco. He did receive a letter of apology from Tesco, however, with a £10 voucher enclosed.

Tesco said that information given to Mr Harada over the likely delay in dealing with his forms was incorrect. It also pointed out that he would not lose out because of the delays, because his money had been earning interest as soon as it was received, not just when the account was in use.

Correctly completed applications sent in before October 3 should have been processed and account cards issued by October 24, says Mr Sach. Subsequent applications should take two to three weeks to process, he added.

Tesco is planning to roll out in-store banks and expects to open nine before Christmas. This should mean that customer applications are dealt with more speedily.

Sainsbury says that it expects to deal with credit card and account inquiries within ten days.



TOMMY WHITE



Michael Hardern made a failed attempt to force Nationwide to convert



Andrew Muir wants the society to give more of its profits to members



City gent Richard Branson continues his moves on the financial services industry

Virgin's new account is ready for take-off

THE £10 million joint venture between Virgin Direct and Royal Bank of Scotland may sound appealing, with its combination of borrowings and savings under one roof and a high rate of interest.

However, according to independent financial advisers, it should only be used by individuals who are financially aware and who can be self-disciplined about their borrowing.

This is because customers are given a credit facility, based on three times their earnings. Part of this debt must be a mortgage of at least £50,000, but borrowings for personal loans or other uses can be added.

Philip Cartwright, an adviser with London & Country Mortgages, said: "There are much better mortgage rates available from mutual societies. Virgin is charging 8.2 per cent as a standard variable rate, while National Counties is charging 7.9 per cent and Nationwide is charging 8.1 per cent. Over a year this could add up to hundreds of pounds' difference in payments."

He also questioned whether there were restrictions on

reducing the debt, since in theory a customer could take a mortgage with Virgin One, pay it off immediately, and then enjoy a rate of 5 per cent on an instant access account.

Virgin says it is looking for customers who earn at least £16,000 a year and who need to take on at least £50,000 of mortgage debt. However, the real target is likely to be people with high incomes, and high outgoings who do not pay off debts every month.

There is an incentive for customers to keep high balances in their account, since the debt will be charged at 8.2 per cent and any salary payments will be credited to that debt on a daily basis.

Virgin Direct already sells personal pensions, personal equity plans (Peps) and life insurance. Tony Wood, Virgin Direct's marketing director, admitted that the new account would not suit everyone and would "polarise opinions".

However, other banks were quick to pour scorn on the product. Gordon Rankin, head of personal banking at Barclays, said:

"A telephone-only product tied to a mortgage is going to have a limited appeal. People who are not disciplined about debt may get into serious financial difficulty. Other banks offer similar flexible mortgages but these have not sold well. We do not see this as a serious threat to our current account business."

Under the terms of Virgin One, customers must agree to use their home as security, and agree to repay everything by retirement.

Instead of having their saving, borrowing and other financial commitments spread among several companies, the new account means people "have it all with a single company which they can trust", Mr Wood said. The account will be available to Virgin Direct's 200,000 customers from November 1, and to the public next year.

Sainsbury, which already has a flexible mortgage, said it was charging a variable rate of 7.9 per cent but did not require customers to have all their accounts with the supermarket.

MARIANNE CURPHEY

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Paying the legacy of

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CHECKLIST

UNDERTAKING a financial health check on your endowment should not be a problem, the life offices claim. All that should be necessary is to write a letter to the insurer, who will supply a projection of how much the endowment might be worth on maturity and whether this will be enough to repay the mortgage. What is more, nearly all life companies carry out automatic internal reviews to test if endowments are on track to repay the mortgage.

Most of the UK's six million to seven million endowment holders will obtain projections showing that their investment is still on course to meet the mortgage repayment. This is because the average with-profits endowment has grown at 9.4 per cent annually since 1987, according to figures from Money Marketing.

However, some endowment holders could nonetheless be in for a nasty surprise. Lauto, the regulator from 1988 until 1993, ordered companies to give invest-

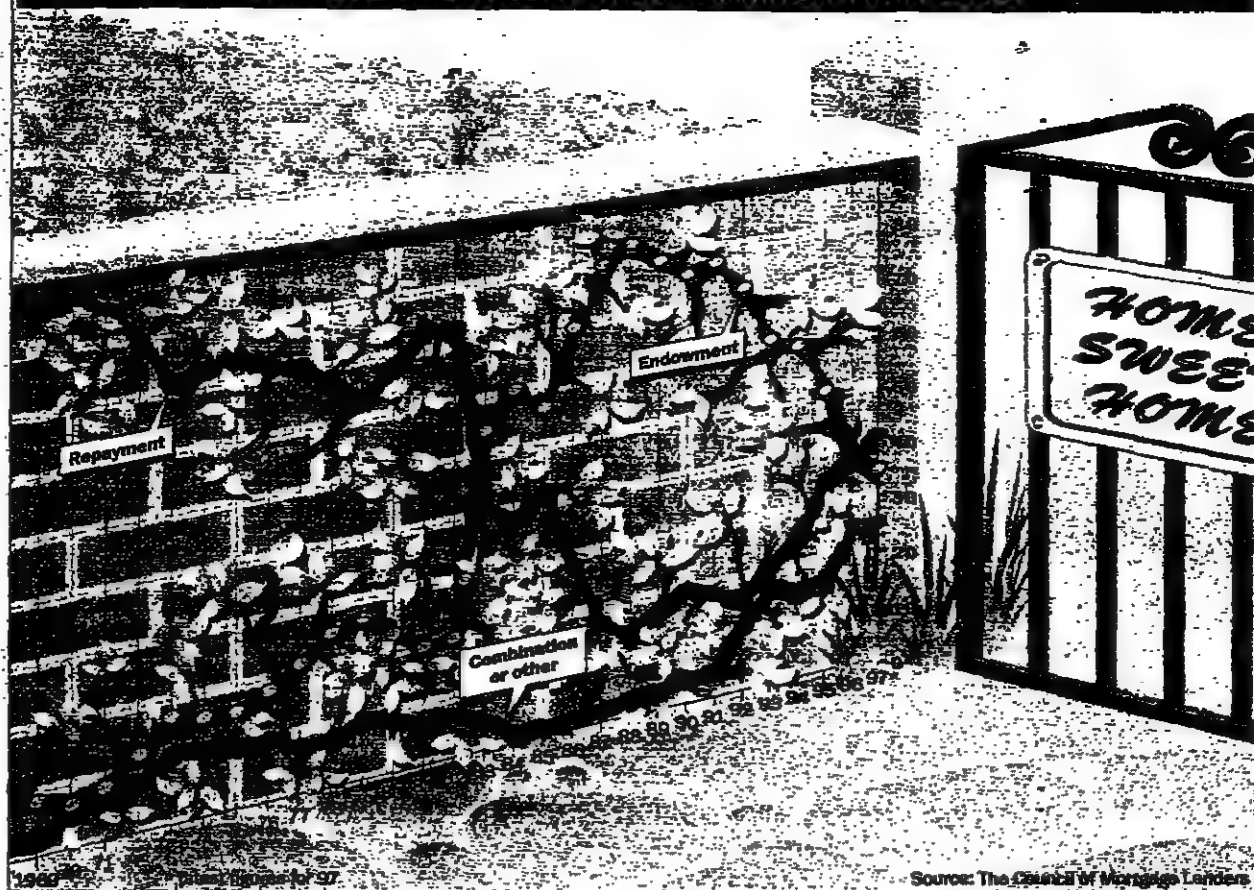
ment projections to customers at 7 per cent and 10.5 per cent. However, companies were also able to set their own "default" rates at which they believed the endowment could grow. Standard Life in the 1980s set a default of 8.5 per cent, while other companies went as high as 9.5 per cent. Furthermore, an independent agent was free to set an even higher default rate.

After 1994 the life offices were forced to project at only 5 per cent, 7.5 per cent and 10 per cent. A householder who took out an endowment on a 10.5 per cent projection will find that a 5 per cent or 7.5 per cent projection will almost certainly suggest hefty increases in premiums.

A Scottish Widows spokesman said: "We are comfortable that policies set up on an assumption of 7.5 per cent growth will meet their target."

Endowment holders should bear in mind that average returns on endowments have been on a declining path for many years.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ENDOWMENT MORTGAGE



TAKE ACTION

IF YOUR endowment provider writes to you with a warning that your policy is not on track to meet the mortgage repayment, what should you do?

Here Weekend Money offer a few pointers on what action can be taken in these circumstances.

■ Don't panic

It could prove foolhardy to surrender (cash in) the endowment to find an alternative. Because of the way that life insurance companies stack charges on the early years to recover their selling costs, cashing in an endowment in the early years should only be done in extreme circumstances.

Patrick Bunton, London & Country mortgage manager, says: "Every time there is an endowment scare, a fair number of people will cancel their policies. That's just as much to your detriment as the policy underperforming."

■ Convert shortfall
The shortfall identified by the insurer can be converted

into a repayment loan. Robert Guy, technical director at John Charcol, said that this makes sense for endowment holders who are sure they will remain with the same lender and stay in their property.

■ Other savings
You can put additional money aside to be invested in another savings vehicle, such as a personal equity plan (PeP), to make up the shortfall.

■ Increase premiums
An alternative course of action would be actually to pay the increased premiums recommended by the insurance company.

However, Mr Bunton said: "If I had an endowment provider writing to me asking for extra premiums I would think 'hold on, this product hasn't achieved what I was told it would and they're now asking me to pay in more'. I would tell them to get stuffed, and find an alternative."

PATRICK COLLINSON

Paying the price for a legacy of the 1980s

Patrick Collinson has advice for endowment policyholders

THE news that Eagle Star is paying millions of pounds to prop up the performance of 30,000 failing mortgage endowments has sent shivers down the spines of millions of 1980s homebuyers.

Eagle Star is not the first to run into problems with its endowment policies, which were sold on the promise of accumulating sufficient funds to pay off the mortgage when it comes due in 20 or 25 years' time. The giants of the life assurance industry admit they have recommended that at least some of their clients start paying more into their policies or face the trauma of having to come up with thousands of pounds on the day the mortgage comes due. In the case of Pearl Assurance, a review last year of 30,000 house purchase policies found that about one in ten should start paying more.

Were you sold a dud? And if so, what are your options now? Three things can go wrong with an endowment. Either the charges were too high, the assumed growth rate was too high or the actual performance was poor.

Eagle Star policyholders were victims of high charges. The company gave customers projections based on standard figures from Lauto, then the regulator, even though its actual charges were much higher. In some cases the charges have eaten into premiums so much that Eagle Star is adding an extra £70 for every £100 paid by the customer to make up for the shortfall. The second category is the failure of assumed growth

rates to live up to expectations. Most homebuyers in the 1980s boom simply wanted to get a foot on the property market ladder, and paid little attention to the insurance salesman's graphs of "Lauto-approved anticipated growth projections".

These allowed salesmen of any insurance company to produce graphs showing the endowment growing by up to 10.5 per cent per year, producing a pile of cash that would easily outstrip the value of the mortgage. In a financial sleight of hand (helped, it must be said, by many customers), the higher the potential growth rate agreed, the lower the premiums paid by the customer. The failure of extravagant projected growth rates to match reality is behind the majority of letters to customers recommending an increase in premium payments.

The third category is failure of actual performance to date. Here the picture is less clear. The majority of endowments sold in the early and mid-1980s were of the with-profits type, which, because they were priced on the basis of only 80

per cent of existing bonus (or investment performance) levels, have had a wide safety margin for underperformance. Unit-linked endowments, which became popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s, do not enjoy this safety buffer, but because they are typically reviewed only after ten years, it is still too early to say if there are problems.

Standard Life sold 1.5 million conventional with-profits endowments until 1991, and says only 1,000 customers have had to raise premiums. On its 150,000 unit-linked endowments, mostly sold after 1991, only 2,000 to 3,000 have even come up for review.

Guardian Financial Services sold thousands of with-profits endowments via its link with Nationwide Building Society in the late 1980s. Its subsequent investment performance was bottom of the rankings produced by Money Marketing between 1991 and 1994, after which Guardian stopped supplying figures. A Nationwide spokesman said: "We are examining the situation and a lot of reviews are due to be done. If there is a necessity for top-ups, we will contact with our customers."

The building society-life office link-ups of the 1980s were the crucial factor in the phenomenal surge of endowment sales. Life offices paid huge commissions on the sale of an endowment which more often than not were recouped when the customer surrendered the endowment early and found that the payout was much less than the premiums paid in.

Typical commission paid to a financial adviser was around two thirds of all the first year's premiums, but for

building societies the rewards were even fatter, with some receiving double even what an independent agent was earning. That translates into a commission of up to £1,500 per mortgage case. Recommending a repayment mortgage instead earned the broker nothing.

At the beginning of the 1980s endowments were relatively unknown, with only one in five homebuyers using them to pay their mortgages. But by 1988, after many of the top societies had linked up with life offices, four out of five homebuyers were being persuaded to buy an endowment.

An Office of Fair Trading report in 1995 blew the whistle on certain endowment practices, but by then the endowment was already in decline as mis-selling reports emerged. Now only 30 per cent to 35 per cent of mortgages are backed by endowments, and the figure is still falling. Leading mortgage brokers John Charcol and London & Country both say they recommend endowments in only about 10 per cent to 15 per cent of cases.

Many life offices are still robustly defending, and selling, endowments. Scottish Provident, for example, says that of 10,000 of its endowment policies that have matured over the past three years, not a single one has failed to repay the mortgage it was assigned to. Standard Life has also led the way in markedly improving early surrender values.

However, other industry spokesmen are contrite. A spokeswoman for the Association of British Insurers said: "Hopefully everyone will have learnt the lessons of the 1980s and things are more accurate now." Peter Timberlake, mortgage manager at Legal & General, added: "The media has caused a considerable loss of confidence in endowments. People are much more willing to question the advice given by financial advisers, and the market is probably in the right proportions now. But the unit-linked endowment has had its day."

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SNT, by and large, has delivered on the promises it made to investors in 1987 and with SNTII is aiming for a less ambitious portfolio yield

Enter the son of SNT

Gavin Lumsden on Gartmore's sequel to its longstanding Scottish National Trust

The complex world of split capital investment trusts is set for a welcome dose of simplification with an announcement this week by Gartmore Investment Management.

Gartmore is launching a successor fund to Scottish National Trust, a mammoth £550 million trust which it manages and which is due to wind up next September.

Split capital trusts originated in the 1960s, when fund managers attempted to achieve the laudable goal of pleasing all investors at once.

The first splits issued two kinds of shares: capital shares for investors seeking capital growth and income shares for people seeking income.

This was a successful innovation initially because, depending on which share they held, investors could get twice as much growth or income as they would from a conventional share. Capital shares, for instance, got all the growth that would have gone to the income shares, while income shares got all the dividends that would have gone to the



capital shareholders. Split caps generally have a fixed life-span of seven to ten years. One of the reasons SNT is so big is that it has been around much longer. The trust started life conventionally with just one class of share in 1924. Threatened with takeover ten years ago, Gartmore successfully defended the trust by creating a dizzying array of share classes. Whereas other split caps will often have two or more share types - capital shares, zero dividend shares, income shares, stepped preference shares - Gartmore gave SNT cumulative preference shares, debentures and warrants as well.

Creating a fund with seven share classes was unprecedented and has not been repeated since. Although SNT has by and large delivered the returns it promised investors in 1987, Gartmore has found the trust extremely difficult to manage. Like many splits, SNT has found that satisfying the dividend requirements of income

investors often harms the prospects for capital share holders.

This week Gartmore went back to basics when it outlined the Second Scottish National Trust (SNTII). With a launch date set for December, SNTII will have just zero dividend shares and ordinary income shares. Diane Wilde, SNT's fund manager, is also aiming for a lower portfolio yield on the new trust, which will enable her to pick from a broader range of stocks.

Zero dividend shares are aimed at investors seeking capital growth. They will be issued at 100p and are designed to grow to 168.39p when SNTII winds up on October 31, 2004, equivalent to a gross redemption yield of 7.85 per cent.

The ordinary income shares are designed to provide a high income yield, starting off at 10.5 per cent gross, and to return investors' capital in seven years.

Gartmore is offering a sweetener to all SNT shareholders to convince them to roll over into SNTII rather than stay where they are until the trust liquidates in 11 months' time. Holders of 1,000 SNT income shares are being offered 1,035 ordinary income

shares to roll over. At current prices this represents an upgrade from a share at 98.25p to one worth 100.35p. Zero holders will get 3,050 shares for every 1,000 zeros in SNT, equivalent to a penny uplift on the 304p price on October 6.

The situation for other SNT investors is more complicated. Because their shares will not exist in the new fund, holders of 1,000 SNT preference shares will get a combination of 980 ordinary income and 730 zero dividend shares. However, this is equivalent to investors getting 171p for 166.75p of assets.

However, SNT capital shareholders have probably the most interesting proposition. They are being offered zeros in SNTII equivalent to 98 per cent of the formula asset value of their SNT capital shares.

This reduction reflects the fact that a riskier investment is being replaced by a more conservative one. Zeros get a predetermined level of capital growth and are ahead of the queue when the trust winds up in 2004. Capital shares get any growth left over.

Gartmore admits the offer is skewed to the income and zero dividend shareholders and

consequently is expecting only £200 million of SNT shares to roll over. Faced with the prospect of losing £300 million of funds and £750,000 of annual fees at a stroke, Gartmore has taken the drastic step of nearly doubling the annual management fee from 0.35 per cent to 0.6 per cent.

Charlie Ricketts, marketing head at Gartmore, defended the move: "Keeping the same fee structure would have lost us a tremendous amount of money. Raising the fee to 0.6 per cent is in line with the industry, which is trending towards 1 per cent. Even this figure is lower than the 1.5 per cent charged by many unit trusts."

Despite the impact of the move investors may want to give Gartmore the benefit of the doubt. The company seems to have learnt from the mistakes of the past and on top of the simplified structure is aiming for a less ambitious portfolio yield.

Whereas SNT had to deliver a yield 50 per cent above the FTSE All-share to satisfy its various shareholders, SNTII is aiming at the 20-45 per cent yield range. As a starting point SNTII will lower the yield target to 38 per cent. This will widen the fund manager's range of stocks to the large and medium-sized companies in the FTSE 350 index.

There will be an EGM for SNT shareholders on November 17 to vote on the proposals.

The fall and rise of markets

Time heals all wounds, they say. It is not nearly ten years since October 19, 1987, aka "Black Monday", when the FTSE 100 fell more than 700 points in a single day and continued to plummet over the ensuing weeks. For many private and professional investors inspired by the Thatcher years it seemed like the end of the world. Yet, according to Templeton Investment Management, we can now see the crash as a minor blip in the relentless upward rise in equities (see chart).

Templeton has taken the MSCI World Index, the benchmark for measuring world stock markets since it was devised in 1970, and extended it back to 1954 to study the effect of bull (upwards) and bear (downwards) markets. On this scale the 1987 crash appears almost benign.

Sandy Naim, author of the study, said: "In world terms the 1987 crash lasted just three months and recorded a fall of 28.4 per cent, compared, for example, with the 18-month bear market which stretched between April 1973 and September 1974 and recorded a fall of 47.4 per cent."

Black Monday also pales next to the decline in equities during 1979-82 when world stock markets reacted to the economic discipline imposed by the monetarist Reagan and Thatcher Governments and fell more than 25 per cent.

Dr Naim's findings are also encouraging

for twichy investors who fear that after seven years of strong stock market growth another "correction" is imminent. He shows that the average bear market lasts one year and falls by 26.4 per cent, compared with bull markets, which last four years on average and rise 103.1 per cent - nearly four times as much. This bears out an old investment rule that says the rate of ascent equals the rate of descent.

"This means that if you can ride out the short, and comparatively small, bear markets, the subsequent swings have always lasted longer and been comparatively much more rewarding," said Dr Naim.

Staying invested while all around you flee is difficult, but it avoids the thorny issue of timing your exit and re-entry, he says. Far too many investors get this wrong and lose out by buying at the peaks and selling in the troughs.

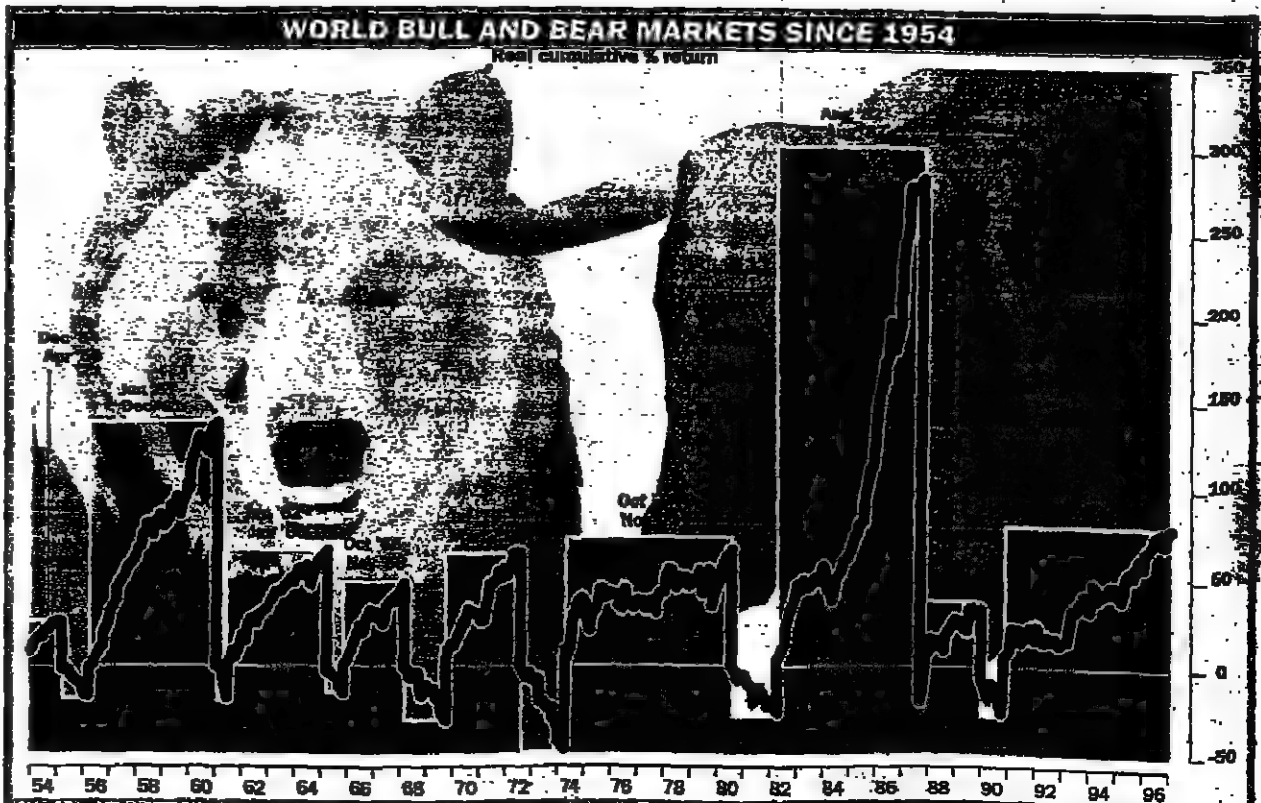
Dr Naim is cautious about isolating reasons for movements in markets or predicting when they might change direction. "Causality is difficult to pin down," he says. "Did the oil price rise in the early 1970s cause the slump then? Did the Bundesbank cause the 1987 crash when it put up interest rates and commented about the state of the market? It is hard to say. All you can say is that they caused people to consider that equities were overvalued." When that

realisation might strike again he is loath to say.

Not everyone agrees with this point of view. Fred Stafford, chairman of Investment Data Services, says that investors should seek to take profits when the time is right. If they cannot do it themselves they should pay a fund manager to do it for them. He believes that fund managers' obsession with benchmarks such as the FTSE 100 obscures the fact many of the stocks on the index are falling and that the apparent remorseless rise in the market is based on the "protected monopolies" of banks and utilities. He says that markets can fall much deeper and for much longer than is given credence.

"We are in a massive equity bubble, similar to the silver and gold bubbles of the early 1980s," he said. "The result of these 'spike' markets was a fall in gold from \$800 to under \$300. The silver fall was even more dramatic down from \$2195 to \$189. This is the way markets with spikes behave. Despite these falls being 17 years ago neither has yet recovered. The stock markets will be no different. The US market after the 1929 crash did not recover until 1954, 25 years later. Contrary to what you may be told, stock markets do not always go up in the end."

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John Givens with the latest in our series for the self-employed

Be prepared for an expensive beginning

Most people like the idea of being their own boss, but before you hand in your resignation and dream of making a million from your own business you should remember that going it alone comes at a cost.

It is not just forgoing a regular salary or having to dip into your own pocket to pay pension contributions that you have to consider. The initial set-up costs for your business will almost certainly be more than you think. Becoming self-employed will involve spending money on two types of expenses: obvious costs and hidden costs.

Obvious costs include things like getting stationary printed, buying desks and computers and having telephone lines installed. Hidden costs are just that: you don't expect them until they hit you in the face and you are left wondering why you did not think of them in the first place.

For example, when you sit down to work out exactly how much capital you will need to get started, will you remember to add the cost of occupier's liability insurance which covers you against any loss or injury claims made by people who have visited your business premises?

And what would happen if you or one of your key business colleagues was called up for jury service? It would almost certainly cost your business money, but by taking out an insurance policy giving an income while you were busy in the Crown Court, the loss could be compensated for.

According to Stephen Alambritis, spokesman for the Federation of Small Businesses, which represents 104,000 members, 300,000 of the 500,000 people who will become self-employed in 1997 will stop trading within three years, many because they did not accurately calculate the costs of starting and running a small business.

Mr Alambritis said: "People turning self-employed often dream of becoming a millionaire overnight and forget to put things down properly on paper. Although they tend to be cautious about their chances of getting customers, those new to self-employment are often too optimistic about the costs of setting up the business."

His advice to people setting up small businesses is to be as honest as possible about the costs. "It is pointless kidding yourself about how much it is going to cost to set up your business, so it is best to be realistic."

"Self-employment can be very satisfying, but it can also be very frustrating. Like a marriage, it can start off with everything smelling of roses but end up in acrimony."

If you want to avoid making the mistake of underestimating your costs, Mr Alambritis advises shopping around the banks. He said: "On average, around 50 per cent of people becoming self-employed set up their business with the help of funding from the bank, which gives them a better chance of surviving because the bank

START-UP COSTS

will instill a financial discipline which those not needing the bank's help might lack."

Most people remember to cater for the core initial costs, such as stationery, telephone installation, a fax machine, office furniture or any necessary tools or equipment, but many forget or do not realise that an array of other expenses are waiting around the corner ready to pounce.

Some of the common expenses that can pass newly self-employed people by when they are planning their business include the following:

HOME START

Working from home will be the cheapest way to accommodate your business. However, if you do and you have a mortgage you should let your lender know since they will probably require you to take out special insurances.

There are also complicated rules which might result in you having to pay capital gains tax on any equity you have in a house used for business purposes when you sell it.

The Inland Revenue allows the home-based self-employed to claim a percentage of their household utility bills — like gas, electricity and telephone — against tax as a justifiable business expense.

However, if you claim say 20 per cent of your bills against tax the Revenue will demand you pay capital gains tax on 20 per cent of any equity you have made during the time you were trading from home. If you sell the property, this can be offset against your annual capital gains tax allowance of £6,500 but because the tax liability is incurred in the year the property is sold, you are not allowed to carry forward unused CGT allowances from previous years.

RENTING

If you decide to rent an office or workshop, your start-up costs will almost certainly be more expensive than working from home.

The easiest way to hire premises is through serviced accommodation where you pay a monthly rent which is inclusive of all charges, such as heating and lighting, rates and central secretarial support. Your costs for serviced accommodation are more or less fixed, making it easier to budget.

However, you will probably be asked to pay a deposit on the premises, as well as the first month's rent, which means for an average weekly rental of say £100, that you would need to find £867 before getting the keys to your new business's door.

If you decide to lease premises the costs will escalate. For starters, you might be

asked to pay the first year's lease up-front, but even if you are not you will need to cover the cost of a solicitor to draw up the lease contract.

SOLICITORS

You can expect to pay about £500 for a solicitor to deal with an existing lease and double that if the leasehold agreement is brand new and the terms need negotiating. It will come as no surprise to know that these costs go up if your business is in London.

If you are not a sole trader you might also need to turn to a solicitor to put together a partnership or directors' agreement. These set out how the business will be run and the responsibilities of the partners or directors. For a straightforward agreement you will find your setting-up capital eroded by a further £500, more if the agreement is complex.

There are many other things a solicitor can help you with when setting up a business, such as contracts of employment, professional indemnity insurance and establishing a limited company. For these types of services expect to pay about £100 an hour for a solicitor and up to £150 for a partner in a legal firm.

EQUIPMENT

How much you spend on specialist equipment will depend on what sort of business you are setting up, but you'll almost certainly need a decent computer system, a fax machine and possibly a vehicle, with the choice to buy or lease.

Leasing, where you pay a monthly amount over an agreed term, is the cheapest option because you'll probably only be asked for three months' payments up front. Whereas buying computer equipment or a car or van will mean a sizeable cash outlay at a time when life will seem expensive enough as it is.

However, for a newly self-employed person, arranging to lease a vehicle may prove difficult because most finance companies want to see a record of success in the business before risking their cash.

INSURANCES

There is a myriad of insurances you will need to take out, or might want to, when you start in business. You must have employer's liability insurance if you employ people and occupier's liability cover if

customers are visiting your company premises. Additionally, it would be foolish to scrap on contents insurance, which would cover your business's belongings in the event of theft or damage, and protecting your income if you are unable to work because of illness or accident should also be a consideration.

You can do this in two ways: with permanent health insurance (PHI) which pays up to 60 per cent of your usual monthly profits until you can return to work, or with critical illness insurance which pays out a lump sum if you contract one of the conditions specified in the policy. Because losing time away from your business will cost money, you might also consider taking out private medical insurance.

If you have a company vehicle, motor insurance will add to your initial expenses as will professional indemnity insurance, which covers you if you are sued by a customer or supplier.

Finally, key man insurance will help if a vital member of staff dies or is unable to continue working.

And after writing cheques to make sure you have insurance to cover all eventualities there is still one further thing to remember — making sure your retirement is catered for through a decent pension.

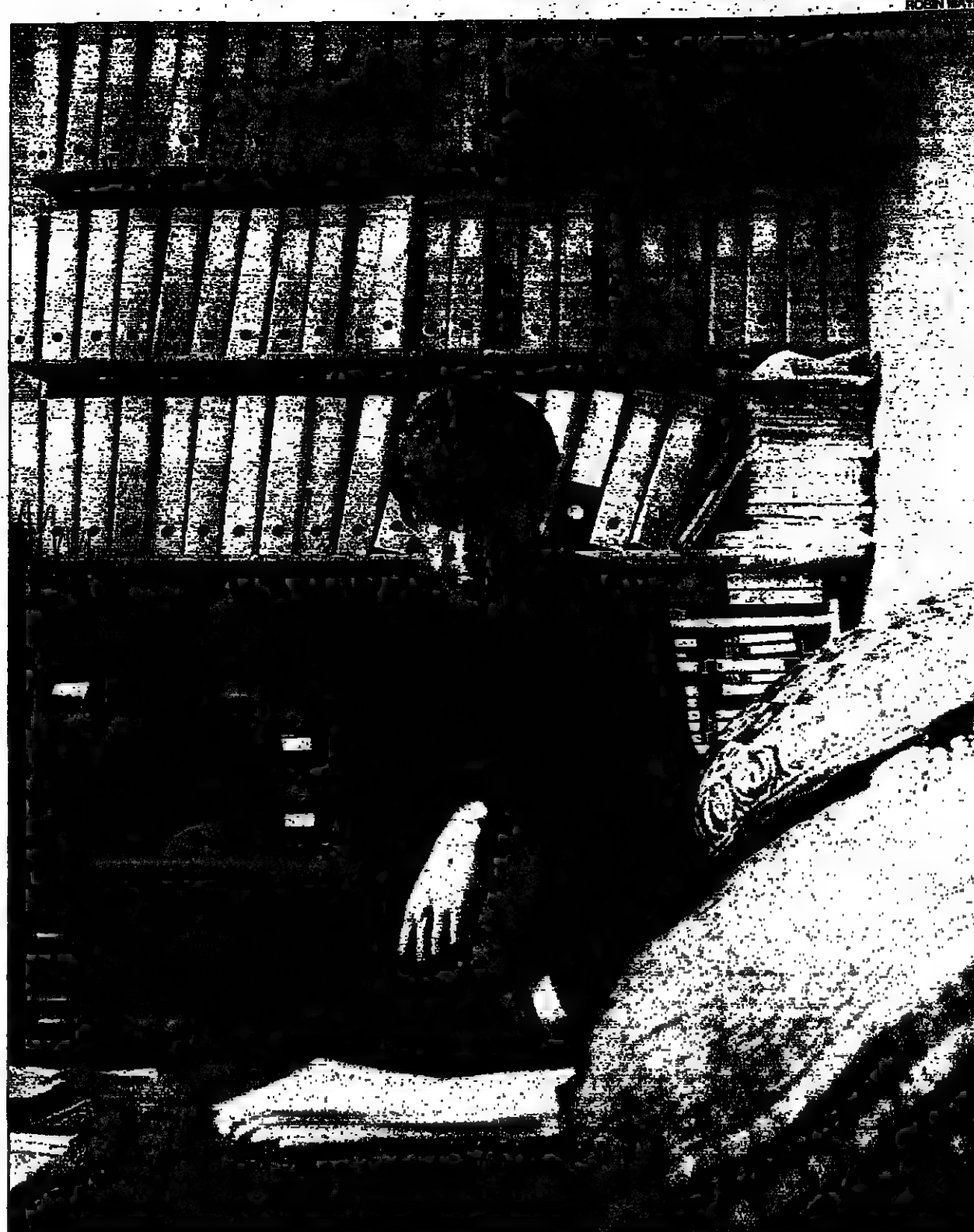
MARKETING

All businesses require some form of marketing. The most common is advertising, so make sure you know where you intend to advertise and find out how much it costs. Taking out an ad in the *Yellow Pages* is a necessary evil and, although it can be expensive, not being there will almost certainly mean you will lose out to your competitors.

If you are planning a company brochure or other product literature, speak to designers and printers about the likely costs and add them to your start-up expenses.

Mailshots are a reasonably cheap way of letting people know you are open for business, but even then the cost of stationery and postage adds up. Estimating 50p per letter to cover letterheads, paper, envelopes, printing and second-class postage will give you some idea of how much a mailing might cost.

The Federation of Small Businesses offers a free package of insurances and assistance to its members, offering 24-hour legal advice, legal representation and up to £100 a day cover for jury service. Membership costs between £90 and £200 a year. Tel: 0171 233 7900 or write to 2 Catherine Place, London, SW1E 6HF.



Matthew Branton leases a personal computer, which he has used to write his next book, due to be published next year

Writer's craft keeps costs low

Author Matthew Branton managed to keep his business set-up costs down to the bare minimum. After quitting his job with a London publisher in December 1995, all that the 28-year-old Kent-born writer needed to pen his first novel was his ageing word processor, but when it finally gave up on him he borrowed other machines until his manuscript was complete.

Matthew, of Crouch End, North London, eventually had his book — *The*

Love Parade — published by Penguin in May this year, after finding an agent willing to represent his work.

The advance fee and royalties from the book has meant that the former Sheffield Hallam University student has been able to lease a new £2,000 PC for £180 a month. Because he works from home he has very low overheads so he has been spared many of the set-up costs experienced by other self-employed workers.

He said: "It cost me very little to set up

although I did have to leave my job because I was finding it too much trying to work full-time and write a book at the same time."

Matthew, who hopes his next book, *The House of Whacks*, will be published in 1998, seemed destined to join the list of Penguin authors after having the Penguin logo tattooed on his arm while on holiday in Ibiza ten years ago.

JOHN GIVENS

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مكتبة النعماني

Bank customers are taken for a ride by trackers

High street banks are taking advantage of inexperienced investors flocking to climb aboard index-tracking funds by making exorbitant up-front charges even though these products are supposed to provide a cheap first step into investment.

While most investment companies waive initial charges on their index-tracking funds, Barclays, Lloyds and Midland all levy fees of between 4.5 and 6 per cent. Even their annual management fees are on the high side, between 1 per cent and 1.5 per cent, compared with less than 1 per cent from most managers.

Index trackers get their name because they aim to match the performance of a stock market index, such as the FTSE 100, by buying every stock in that index. This passive philosophy is based on the belief that because markets are bound to go up in the long term there is no point taking the risk of choosing active fund managers who pick bad stocks as often as good ones.

The success of index trackers over actively managed funds has been well documented. This week new figures from the pensions industry showed that not only had the average tracker fund delivered similar returns to the average active fund in the past five years, they had done so much more consistently. In other words, trackers offer a lower-risk way of investing in stocks and shares.

It is important to note that they do not remove risk entirely. If the stock market falls, so, inevitably, will tracker funds. Trackers are relatively

Gavin Lumsden
on how the whole
ethos of index
tracking is
undermined by
up-front charges

cheap to run. Index fund managers do not have to spend vast resources researching stocks because, on the whole, they buy everything there is on offer. Also, because they tend to be big buyers of shares they can arrange good deals with their brokers and reduce costs further.

However, none of this gets passed on to unsuspecting investors who drift into their local bank branch for investment advice. By paying high initial charges, investors in trackers run by the banks see between 4.5 per cent and 6 per cent less of their money invested in the stock market than if they had chosen a zero-charging tracker. In other words, they constantly track behind the index.

A £1,000 lump sum investment will have between £45 and £60 taken off at the start and may never catch up. If these sums do not sound like a lot, remember the potential returns that those trackers could have made are lost forever. The cumulative effect for regular savers is even more damaging. A monthly saver putting aside £100 in a tracker will lose £4.50 to £6 off every payment to the banks.

With this self-imposed hurdle to jump, it is no surprise

that the bank funds are some of the worst-performing index trackers. If you had invested £1,000 a year ago and sold out last month, the Barclays FTSE 100 Fund (which charges 5 per cent initial and 1.5 per cent annual) would have given you £1,262.54. Lloyds Bank FTSE 100 (6 per cent initial, 1 per cent annual) would have returned £1,269.86 and Midland FTSE 100 Index (4.5 per cent/1 per cent) £1,295.65. This is an impressive return but has been made possible by the exceptional performance of large stocks such as drug companies and, ironically, the banks.

Low-charging trackers did even better. Fidelity Moneybuilder Index (0.0 per cent, 0.5 per cent) topped the table with £1,360 while River & Mercantile (0 per cent, 0.35 per cent) was second with £1,357.

The disadvantage for regular savers is more glaring. If you had put £100 a month into the ideal (and non-existent) FTSE 100 tracker with no charges you would have accrued £5,502. Barclays and Midland, however, would have given you more than £300 and £400 less respectively.

Virgin Direct, whose UK Index Tracking Fund charges nothing up front and 1 per cent a year, says the effect of charges gets more alarming the longer you invest. Topping up a £1,000 investment with £100 every month in a fund which charges 5 per cent every time you invest will give you £19,300 over ten years, £1,000 less than if there had been no initial fee.

Tony Wood, Virgin Direct marketing director, said: "The higher the charges the more the index becomes irrelevant. The



banks are selling a concept but the reality isn't delivered."

Banks are not the only high chargers. Norwich Union, Royal Life, Kleinwort Benson, Schroders and Marks & Spencer levy the sort of fees you would expect on actively managed funds. However, the banks do seem to give their branch customers a particularly raw deal. Barclays is the largest index fund manager in the country, yet it seems unable, or unwilling, to offer the value-for-money approach of its smaller rivals.

Legal & General, with £25 billion under management, has introduced a regular savings scheme starting at £30 per month on its Pep, which includes its UK and European index trackers. Although there

is no initial charge as such, there is a fixed £2 transaction fee for every payment and an annual management charge of 0.5 per cent (0.75 per cent for the European tracker).

Most Midland customers presumably do not realise that they can get a cheaper version of the bank's FTSE 100 index fund elsewhere. HSBC Asset Management, the UK fund management arm of the HSBC group, launched HSBC Footsie four years ago, charging 0.5 per cent initial and a 1 per cent annual management fee. A year later the fund was rebranded and introduced to Midland, where it charges customers eight times more up-front.

This injustice is exacerbated by the fact that Midland Direct, another HSBC subsidiary, offers the House of Names Pep, an actively managed fund investing in UK blue chips, which charges no initial fee.

Midland and Barclays said that they need to levy the extra fees to pay commission to their financial advisers. A spokesman for Midland said HSBC Footsie was advertised direct or sold through fee-charging advisers and therefore commission was unnecessary and the charges were lower.

He said branch customers were advised on a range of products and the tracker had to share in the costs of supporting the advisers. Even if that meant the tracker would track less well as a result? And what if the best advice for a client was a FTSE 100 tracker? Surely a Midland adviser should suggest the customer should ring up HSBC and ask for a Footsie? There was no comment.

The message seems to be: if it's a tracker you want, walk out of the bank.

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Competitive rate position based on annual interest rate compared with all other offshore Instant Access and Notice Accounts that allow immediate penalty-free access. Source: Moneyfacts as at 16/10/97. The rates include a loyalty bonus of 1% gross p.a., calculated daily and paid annually on the anniversary date. This is paid provided the account is still open and in the preceding 12 months no more than two withdrawals have been made and the balance has not been less than £2,000. Interest will be calculated net of income tax, properly 20% (which may be reclaimed by non-taxpayers), or subject to the required registration. Gross. Tax legislation is subject to change. Rates are variable. The account is open to permanent UK residents only. Telephone calls may be monitored or recorded. Prudential Banking plc is registered in England and Wales. Registered Office: 142 Holborn Bars, London EC1N 2NH. Registered number 2999042.

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Renewal date _____

Age of people to be included _____

Clare Stewart takes a look at the high-risk, high-reward alternative to the main stock market

Small fry aim for big returns

Later this month honours will be handed out for the AIM Company of the Year. Not quite the Oscars, perhaps, but a moment in the spotlight for companies traded on what is described as the junior stock market.

The Alternative Investment Market was set up in 1995 to provide a lower-cost opportunity for young companies to attract outside investment. Many of these companies may fit the profile of high-risk, high-reward investments and are therefore not for the stock market novice. However, for those who want to become more familiar with this market, Weekend Money answers some of the most common questions about AIM.

Q What exactly is the Alternative Investment Market?

A The market came into being to allow young companies that would not qualify for inclusion in the main stock market a lower-cost route into raising growth capital from investors other than venture capital sources. AIM is regulated by the London Stock Exchange, but to encourage investment in what it is hoped will be fast-growing companies the rules are less rigorous than those for the main market.

For example, companies do not have to have been trading for a minimum period, nor do they have to have a percentage of shares in public hands. AIM companies must publish a prospectus, have accounts conforming to UK, US or international accounting standards and have a nominated adviser and a broker.

Q How different is AIM to the main market?

A Many AIM companies are very small businesses and may be capitalised at just a few million pounds. To join the main market a company has to be capitalised at more than £700,000, have a three-year trading record and a minimum of 25 per cent of shares in public hands.

Q How big is the Alternative Investment Market?

A There are 293 companies, capitalised at around £5.5 billion. To put it into perspective, the main market is capitalised at £1,190 billion, with some 2,170 companies listed. Since it first began trading AIM companies have raised more than £1.4 billion of investment.

Q What sort of companies are listed?

A The range is diverse: from football clubs to

INVESTMENT A GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS

gold mines, from biotechnology to pub groups. The list includes a number of familiar names such as West Bromwich Albion, Chelsea Village, Whitbards of Chelsea — the chain of tea and coffee shops — and Mulberry Group, the fashion and furnishings group. There is also a large number of start-up and technology related companies.

Q Have companies moved up to the main market?

A Some 13 companies have moved from AIM to the Official List. These included TOAD, the car security company, Old English Pubs and Network Technology. Others have moved in the opposite direction. Billam, an engineering and leisure products company moved onto AIM in June, citing the less onerous regulations over acquisitions as its reason for moving.

Q How successful has the market been?

A In terms of the number of companies it has attracted and the amount of money they have raised, AIM has been very successful. AIM stocks also number among the top-performing stocks. Shares in Celtic, the football club, have soared from their issue price of £64 to a high this year of £50. Country Gardens, the garden centre group, has seen its share price jump 113 per cent over the past year to 240p.

However it has not been plain sailing for the market. A run of poor results, profit warnings from companies and the disappearance of groups such as Firecrest, Greenhills and Scottish Pride this year have tainted its image. Consequently a number of institutional investors have kept their distance and some brokers have pulled out of floating young companies on AIM, while the Stock Exchange has also tightened some of the rules.

Q Should private investors look at AIM?

A Given the high-risk nature of some AIM companies, ordinary investors might well ask what is in it for them. Investors may also have a problem if shares in a company are illiquid. This may occur where relatively few shares in a particular company are being traded, so investors may find it difficult to find a buyer if they want to sell. There are a number of tax

incentives available to investors, but only on certain qualifying AIM stocks.

Tax breaks include up to 20 per cent tax relief under the Enterprise Investment Scheme. This applies to new shares issued when an AIM company floats and includes investment up to £100,000. The shares have to be held for five years. It is also possible to roll over a capital gains liability by investing in a qualifying AIM company. Holdings in qualifying companies may also qualify for relief from Inheritance Tax.

Q How can investors find out about AIM firms?

A In addition to press coverage of AIM, potential investors should take care to look at all available information on the company, and be advised by a stockbroker familiar with AIM. To find out whether an AIM stock is a qualifying group for tax relief, contact the group's nominated adviser. For a copy of the AIM newsletter, call 0171-600 28700



On the up and up: Celtic's shares have soared from £64 to more than £500 since joining AIM

Have you missed the self-assessment deadline?

The Inland Revenue's key deadline of 30th September has now passed. This means if you're required to file a Tax Return under the new self-assessment regulations, you must calculate your own tax liability. For most people this is a daunting prospect, but don't panic — TaxCalc 1996-97 will do the hard work for you! Published by Which?, TaxCalc 1996-97 is a software package (including both CD ROM and disk versions) which will complete the new self-assessment tax return for you, helping you to avoid expensive mistakes and calculate exactly how much tax you should be paying. Simply enter your personal details on-screen and TaxCalc does the rest!

This money saving package shows how much the Inland Revenue may owe you, calculates the minimum you're obliged to pay and includes the new self-assessment tax return and accompanying schedule sheet.

• extensive help files

• comprehensive self-employment coverage

• a detailed tax summary

• how to claim a tax rebate

• up to 50 tax saving tips to help you make the most of your money.

You can print out your own Inland Revenue-approved self-assessment tax return, which you can submit to the Revenue in place of its own Return form. It really couldn't be easier!

TaxCalc 1996-97 costs just £29.99 (P&P are FREE). To order send your name and address and your payment (cheque — made payable to Which? Ltd or your credit card number with expiry date) to: Which?, PO Box 89, Dept T217, Hertford SG14 1TB. Orders are normally despatched within 14 days of receipt. Full refund if not satisfied.

TaxCalc does not cover Partners and Partnerships or Foreign Income other than that from a UK employer i.e. income from foreign investments, pensions and gains on which overseas tax could be deducted. Please note, to run TaxCalc you need — IBM PC 486 and 100% compatibles, Windows 3.1, 95 and NT, VGA graphics and 8mb RAM.

BARGAIN INVESTMENTS IN EMERGING MARKETS

{ Where does Dr J Mark Mobius dig them up? }



THE QUEST FOR THE BEST VALUE INVESTMENTS TAKES TEMPLETON WHERE NO INVESTOR HAS VENTURED BEFORE. (IS THAT WHY TEMPLETON PERFORMANCE LEAVES OTHER FUNDS BEHIND?)

The Sunday Times described Templeton's Dr J Mark Mobius as 'The Indiana Jones of the investment world'. Mark spends 250 days each year visiting far-flung companies, searching for the best equity bargains in the fastest-growing economies.

Today, Templeton has the best track record of any emerging markets fund manager in the world. Says who? Says Micropal, the people who monitor fund performance all over the world.®

Since launching the first stock market listed fund for emerging markets in 1987, Templeton has built up a \$14 billion emerging markets portfolio.®

Emerging Markets can be riskier than other investments. But backed by a team of 27 analysts, Dr Mobius' dedication has paid off handsomely for Templeton investors. Average 5 year returns on Templeton emerging markets funds exceed 150%: equal to average annualised returns of 20%. (Sector average 14%.®)

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Recent uncertainty may have driven some investors out of emerging markets. But Templeton believe that 'the point of maximum pessimism' is when patient investors find real bargains.

Templeton offer two emerging markets funds in the UK: Templeton Emerging Markets Investment Trust and the off-shore Templeton Global Strategy Funds. (As well as a range of single country funds and fixed income funds.) And with regular savings plans from as little as £30 per month, almost anyone can afford to take advantage of these exciting opportunities.

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مركز الاستثمار

THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Money advice for worried tourists

According to research by Gallup, 90 per cent of British tourists worry about coping with their money abroad. Visa has produced a Money Guide for 1997 focusing on 12 of the top short and long-haul destinations for UK holidaymakers to help the worried majority to plan financially for an autumn or winter getaway. The guide includes practical advice on what holiday money you should take, plus bank and shop opening hours. The leaflet also offers some useful tips on financial etiquette in different countries, for example when tipping or haggling. For a free copy, call 0171-231 5432.

£600 million in cash will be shared among 1.1 million Scottish Amicable members after Prudential's completed acquisition of the mutual life company. Policyholders can expect to receive their cheques by the middle of next week. The minimum payment to eligible members is £250. In addition, Scottish Amicable policyholders will receive details of the bonus added to qualifying policies at October 1, 1997. Policyholders may be in line to receive further bonuses when their policies mature. A helpline has been set up to deal with queries relating to the cash and policy benefits. Call 0345 888555 9am-6pm, Monday to Friday.

The Inland Revenue has published three new leaflets in its Personal Taxpayer Series. *Income Tax and Relocation Packages* (IR134) explains how employees are taxed if they receive help to move house by their employer. The guide highlights which expenses and benefits may qualify for exemption, the rules for bridging loans and the tax situation if you move to or from the UK.

If you are thinking of investing in a PEP, the Inland Revenue's leaflet on the subject (IR99) explains what they are and how they work. It reveals who is eligible for a PEP, the tax advantages, the number of PEPs you can have and when you can take money out.

What to do about tax when someone dies (IR45) provides information about income tax, capital gains tax and inheritance tax. Included are sections on the responsibilities of personal representatives and trustees, and on the tax treatment of beneficiaries.

Free from tax centres or by calling 0645 000404.

LIZANNE ROSE

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME			
Rates as at October 16, 1997			
Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)	
1 Year	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.00
	5,000	AIG Life	6.27
	10,000	GE Fin Assur	6.75
2 Years	1,000	Hambro Assured	6.10
	5,000	GE Fin Assur	6.35
	10,000	Hambro Assured	6.75
3 Years	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.65
	5,000	ITT London & Ed	6.30
	10,000	Hambro Assured	6.40
4 Years	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.90
	5,000	ITT London & Ed	6.15
5 Years	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.80
	5,000	Pinnacle Insurance	6.35

Source: Chambers & De Brose 0171-434 4322. Not rates, income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

SAVERS' BEST BUYS

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Sainsbury's Bank 0800 405060	Inst Access	Instant	£1	6.50 Y/y
C&G 0800 742437	Inst Transfer	Instant	£1,000	7.00 Y/y
C&G General Bank 0500 111200	Direct Access	Postal	£2,500	7.05 Y/y
First National BS 0800 558844	Direct Access	Postal	£5,000	7.45 Y/y

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bristol & West 0800 202121	Post 30	30 day p	£10,000	7.50 Y/y
Cheltenham BS 0800 132351	Post 30	30 day p	£25,000	7.35 Y/y
Coventry BS 0345 685522	Post 30	30 day p	£5,000	7.35 Y/y
Legal & General Bank 0500 111200	80 Direct	80 day p	£5,000	7.50 Y/y

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Yorkshire BS 0800 378838	5 year	£2,000	7.65 Y/y	
Principality BS 01222 344188	5 year	£2,500	7.65 Y/y	
Harley Economic BS 0800 638811	5 year	£1,000	7.60 Y/y	
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	5 year	£3,000	7.60 Y/y	

CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

Card type	Interest per month	APR%	Fee per annum
Capital One Bank 0800 669000	0.64%AN	7.90%AN	NIL
Co-operative Bank 0800 110000	0.64%AN	7.90%AN	NIL
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829100	1.00%C	12.70%AN	NIL

PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

Account	APR	Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs with insurance	Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs no insurance
Direct Line 0181 680 9966	12.80%AN	£183.75	£166.38
Capital One Direct 0800 216252	12.90%	£186.48	£168.54
Alliance & Leic Grp 0980 626262	13.30%	£187.73	£167.56

NB: A = Minimum age 22 years, B = Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System, C = No interest free period, N = Introductory rate for a limited period, P = By Post only

* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING

Source: Moneyfacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01892 500 677)

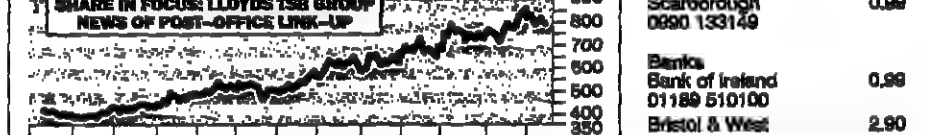
PIBS

Account	Gross coupon	Buying price	Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase
FIXED RATE					
Birmingham Midshires	9.375%	125.28	7.442	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley	11.825%	151.84	7.658	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley	13.000%	170.28	7.635	100.20	10,000
Britannia	13.000%	169.84	7.864	100.42	1,000
Coventry	12.125%	159.77	7.821	100.75	1,000
First National	11.750%	151.62	7.750	100.25	10,000
Leeds & Holbeck	13.375%	175.85	7.808	100.23	1,000
Newcastle	10.750%	140.60	7.586	100.32	1,000
Newcastle	12.625%	168.03	7.804	100.45	1,000
Northern Rock	12.625%	163.90	7.703	100.14	1,000
Skipston	12.875%	169.31	7.805	100.48	1,000
FLOATING RATE					
Cheshire (30/09/27/03/09/83/750%)		120.00	100.00	1,000	
First Nat (22/09/20/03) 9.88350%		105.00	100.00	1,000	

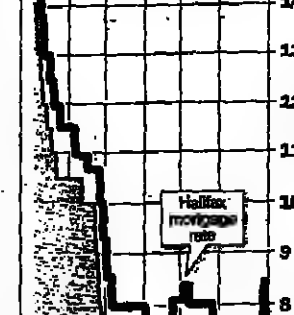
PIBS = Permanent Interest-bearing Shares

Source: ABN AMRO Home Growth - 0171 801 0101

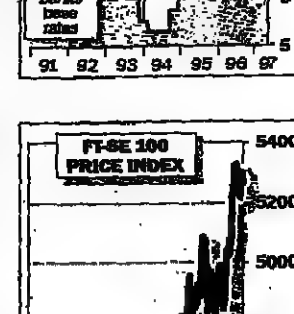
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BASE RATES V MORTGAGES



FTSE 100 PRICE INDEX



LARGER LENDERS

Lender	Interest rate	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies	5.5%	£20-150k	80	Fixed to 1.65%
0800 221261				
Nationwide	5.75%	to £300k	90	2.35% discount for 2 years
0300 302010				
Yorkshire	4.95%	£25-150k	95	3% discount for 1 year
0800 378838				
Bank of Ireland	0.9%	£20-145k	95	Fixed - 6 mths, 3% disc-6 mths
01189 510100				
Bristol & West	2.9%	no max	90	Fixed at 2.90% to 1.11.98
01179 792222				

LARGER LOANS

Lender	Interest rate	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies	0.75%	£25-150k	75	Fixed at 0.75% to 31.1.98
0800 221261				
Nationwide	1.20%	to £100k	95	1% disc-6 mths, 1% disc-12 mths
0300 302010				
Yorkshire	0.9%	£15-100k	95	7.24% disc-6 mths, 2% disc-12 mths, 0.5% p.a.
0800 378838				
Bank of Ireland	0.9%	£20-145k	95	Fixed-6 months, 3% disc-6 months
01189 510100				
Bristol & West	2.9%	no max	90	Fixed until 1.11.98
01179 792222				

NATIONAL SAVINGS

	Gross rate	At tax rates	Minimum investment	Notice	Contact	
Ordinary A/c	1.50	1.20	10-10,000*		0845 845000	
Investment A/c	4.75	3.80	20-500*	1mth	0845 845000	
Income Bond	6.50	5.25	3,000-25,000*	3mth	0845 845000	
First Opt Bond	6.25	5.00	5,000-20,000*		0845 845000	
44th Issue Bonds	6.25		100-10,000	8day	0845 845000	
Children's Bonds	6.75		25-1,000	1mth	0845 845000	
Gen Est Rate	3.51				0845 845000	
Capital Bonds	6.65	5.32	3.99	100-250,000	8day	0845 845000
11th Ind Linked	2.75		100-10,000	6day	0845 845000	
Pennine Bond	5.70	5.60	4.20	500-50,000	6day	0845 845000

* See ETO (140) of net tax rate, first 10% of up to £100 - Unlimited additional funds for new investors. *TAN free. *Rates gross and net. *Guaranteed until held for 5 years. *10% net bonus for £10,000 - £100,000 in addition to £1 and £2 holdings. *Variable but used in full. *£250-100,000 earn higher rates. **Fixed rates apply.

PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual annuity (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance

SINGLE LIFE (level ann)	Male: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Standard Lf	£9,044	£10,136	£11,564
Canada Lf	£9,084	£10,130	£11,620
Sun Lf of Can	£9,968	£10,050	£11,454
Legal & General	£9,994	£10,049	£11,899

SINGLE LIFE

Prudential	Level	£8,386	£ 9,205	£10,548
Canada Life	Level	£8,325	£ 9,151	£10,353
Generall	Level	£8,156	£ 9,088	£10,368
Sun Lf of Can	Level	£8,230	£ 8,993	£10,104

JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity)	Male:	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
	Female:	Age 55	Age 60	Age 65

JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS

Equitable Life	£7,807	£8,394	£9,197
Source: Annuity Direct (0171 684 5000)			
Statistics compiled by Lizanne Rose			

FIRST-TIME BUYERS

Lender	Interest rate	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies	4.85	£30-100k	95	3% discount for 1 year
01635 43676				
Mansfield	2.20	£25-250k	90	5% discount-4 mths
01246 202055				
Clay Cross	5.25	£15-100k	95	3% discount for 12 months
01246 862120				
Bank of Ireland	0.9%	£20-145k	95	Fixed for 6 mths, 3% disc-6 mths
01189 510100				
Halifax plc	5.45	£25-250k	95	3% disc-30.9.98, 5% disc-30.9.98
01422 333333				

Larger lenders, loans and first-time buyers tables by Ely's Guide Ltd. (01753 882482)

FOR MORE DETAILS OF OUR RATES

LOOKING FOR BETTER MORTGAGE RATES? SEE TELETEXT PAGE 545

0800 0800 88

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UNIT-LINKED INSURANCE INVESTMENTS

WY %				WY %				WY %				WY %				WY %				WY %				WY %			
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Take out a stake in Eastern Europe

Save & Prosper is launching an open-ended investment company (OEIC) today offering investors a stake in the development of Russia and Eastern Europe.

S&P's New Europe Fund is the fourth OEIC (pronounced oik) to be launched so far in Britain and will be managed by its owners, Flemings, who already have more than £650 million in the former Communist bloc.

The minimum stake is £2,000 but you can choose instead to save a regular £35-a-month. The advantage of the savings option, according to Nigel Sidebottom of Greig Middleton Asset Management, is that you do not have to work out whether it is the right time to invest. The initial charge of 5.5 per cent is on the high side, but until November 7 (which S&P helpfully points out is the 90th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution) you can get a discount of 1 per cent on share purchases up to £5,000, with 2 per cent off for stakes above that amount. The subsequent annual charge is 1.5 per cent.

Analysis suggests that reasonably high charges might be justified in this case. Ian Millward of the independent financial advisers Chase de Vere says that Eastern Europe is a difficult and expensive place to manage funds. In the absence of reliable published information, S&P will have to rely entirely on primary research and visit companies to pick stocks, since they are committed to a bottom-up approach to investment.

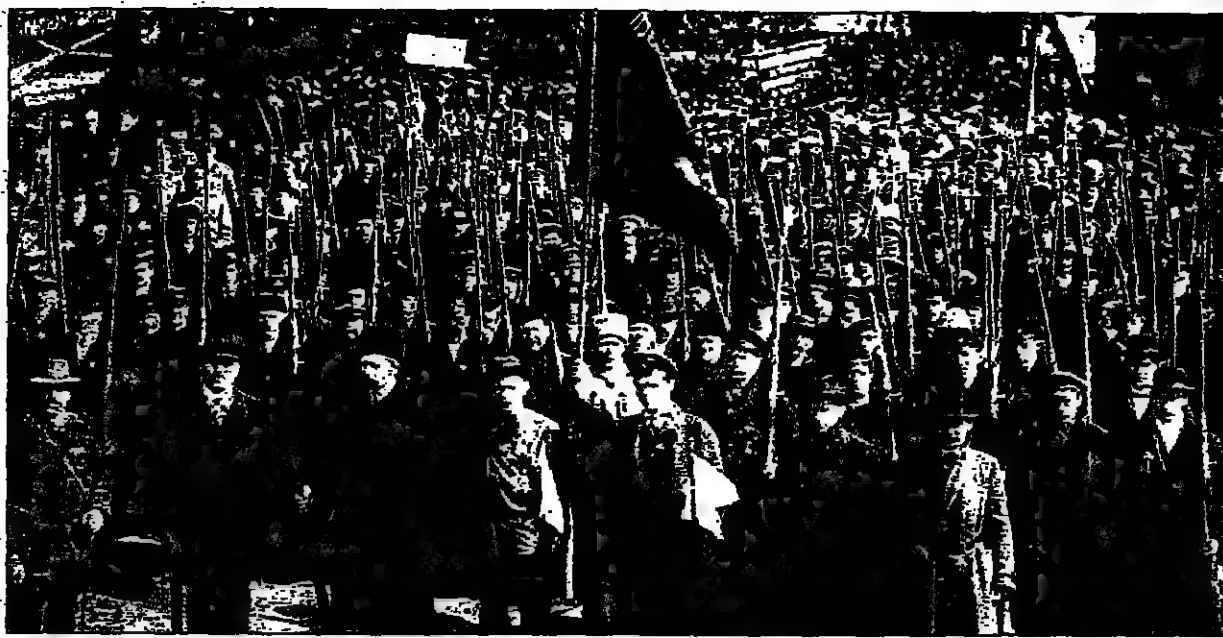
The New Europe Fund has 90 per cent of its assets placed

HOR MISS

equally in Russia, Poland and Hungary. The remainder is scattered in Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia with 2 or 3 per cent in cash. Most Russian exposure is in the energy sector — in mega-companies such as Gazprom and Lukoil. Rob Fisher, S&P's Investment Marketing Manager, said: "Russian oil companies' valuations are generally two to three times cheaper than their Western counterparts" but Lukoil is trading at an average of \$1.20 a barrel against a world average of between \$7 and \$9.

The fund's sectorial breakdown, based on Fleming's flagship Eastern European Fund, comprises 28 per cent in energy, 11 per cent each in financial and construction materials, 8.5 per cent in telecoms. However, Mr Millward expects the fund's country weightings to shift considerably, especially in Poland and Hungary, but he regards Flemings as a safe pair of hands: "Chase de Vere would have no worries about them in Eastern Europe."

East European stock markets, nurtured in their mass privatisation programmes, have soared recently. In sterling terms, Russia gained 75 per cent last year and a further 174 per cent so far this year, while Hungary gained 107 per cent last year and 62 per cent this year. Poland has



Russian revolution: Save & Prosper's New Europe Fund comes with high risks, but it could reward patient investors

moved more sedately with a 53 per cent rise last year and a mere 4 per cent this year.

There is probably a good deal of potential left. Bullish global fund managers are continuing to pile money into countries gradually becoming more politically stable and investor-friendly. Economic reforms look likely to deliver long-awaited economic growth, and more companies — even in Russia — are starting to publish internationally acceptable accounts. S&P, like other fund managers, is attracted by low valuations, while new issues are adding depth and liquidity to the young stock markets.

Critics of S&P's investment strategy, such as Mr

Sidebottom, believe "it is not running a sufficiently diversified portfolio in terms of asset allocation, though it is based on the existence of a lot of cheap companies. S&P is taking big bets on a relatively small number of markets."

Mr Fisher rejects diversification for its own sake. He says the New Europe Fund is not designed for risk-averse investors seeking immediate income, but for those with a healthy risk appetite prepared to wait for long-term capital growth. The fund's brochure states frankly that it is not expecting to pay any dividends.

Expect a volatile performance, Mr Fisher advises

investors not to commit more than 5 per cent of their savings to the fund and to wait at least five years before expecting a reward.

However, if you have patience and £2,000 or £35-a-month to spare you can, to quote Stefan Boettcher, the New Europe Fund's manager, "get in on the ground floor and do very well over the longer term."

The New Europe Fund certainly offers the small punter easier access than its competing OEIC, Global Asset Management's Japan Growth Fund, with its minimum stake of £10,000. On the other hand, for those not wishing to put all their eggs in one basket, there are OEICs with a global spread of investments such as

those offered by Threadneedle Investments (minimum stake £2,000) or Rothschild Asset Management (minimum stake £1,000 or £50 monthly).

An OEIC is a new form of unit trust with a single price instead of the conventional dual pricing structure based on a bid-offer spread. Buyers and sellers of OEICs deal at the same price so costs and charges are more transparent than with conventional unit trusts. Legally, OEIC investors are company shareholders rather than beneficiaries of a unit trust.

Score: ★★★
Products graded from ★ (poor) to ★★★★★ (outstanding).

DAVID RUDNICK

WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Less paper and more information please

From Mrs E. Haughton
Sir, Susan Emmett's piece (Division time for BZW investors, October 11) mentioned the choices available to shareholders in this BZW convertible trust, but did not mention all the paper sent out to shareholders to enable them to reach their decision.

The mailing weighed 11lb 3oz (535 grams) and would have taken hours to read in full.

It started with the usual advice — "this document is important... you should consult your stockbroker, bank manager, solicitor, accountant, etc."

This seems to be a bit of statutory nonsense — none of these people can advise without reading it all thoroughly and would inevitably charge for their time, and even then might not be able to attend to it within the short time available for decision-making.

And where do you find a bank manager nowadays?

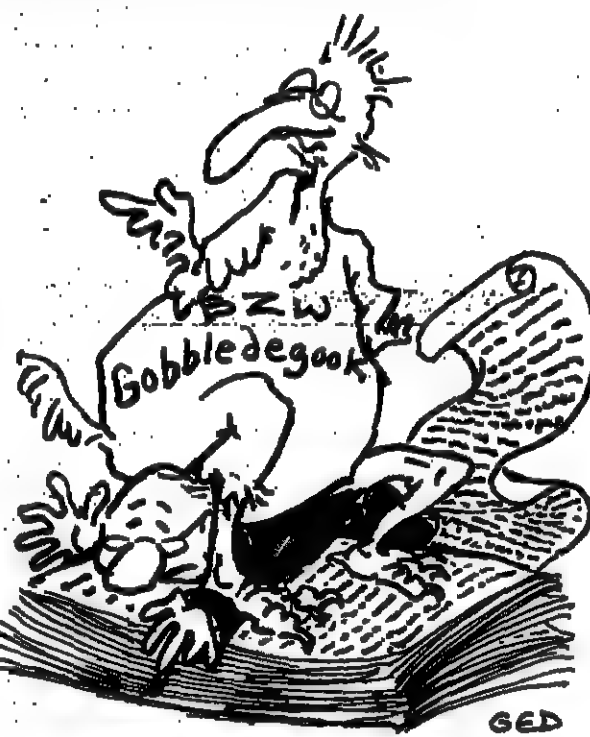
The only real choice is to take the cash and run. Voting is pointless, as the big shareholders have already been consulted and the timetable for conversion drawn up.

So what is the point of sending all this paper? Can't it be reduced in weight, complexity and technical jargon?

Everything is repeated several times over, but the only information that one really wants — which is "how much money will I get?" — is nowhere to be seen.

I think it is time the appropriate authority reviewed and reduced all this bumph.

Perhaps one of your writers would like to comment on this — it's just another deterrent to private shareholders. Yours faithfully, E. HAUGHTON, Shareholder in BZW Convertible Trust, Ashley Green, Beamesworth, Stamford, Lincolnshire.



Poser for basic-rate taxpayers

From Mr Joe Wignall

Sir, If my own inquiries are anything to go by, I am in no doubt that you would be providing an invaluable service to a large body of your readers by a clarification or explanation of dividend and interest income in respect of the overall tax liabilities of standard (basic-rate) taxpayers.

The information that accompanies dividend payments invariably includes the statement: "Lower rate (20 per cent) tax deducted — there will be no additional tax liability for basic-rate (23 per cent) taxpayers."

As this statement appears to me to conflict directly with the logic of the arithmetic compilation of an individual's taxable income and their tax liability, I have asked several tax specialists and accountants to try to supply me with an explanation.

The answers I have received fall into roughly three groups: Those who are not deliberately

evasive say that the statement is effective only if one remains within the lower-rate tax band. Others say that "the statement means just what it says."

What, please, is the authoritative view? Yours faithfully, JOE WIGNALL, Little House, South Esplanade, Burnham-on-Ses, Somerset.

Shop around

From Mrs P.D. Waller
Sir, It certainly does pay to shop around.

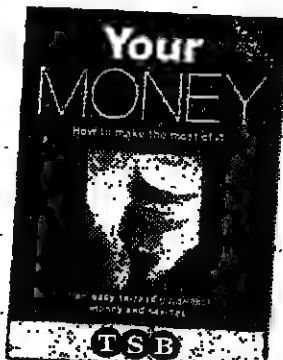
I recently sold some shares for £4,250 and my bank, Barclays, charged me £70.13 commission.

Last week I sold some shares for £4,078 and ShareLink only charged £37.50 commission. Yours faithfully, PATRICIA WALLER, 128 Wellesley Court, Maids Vale, W9.

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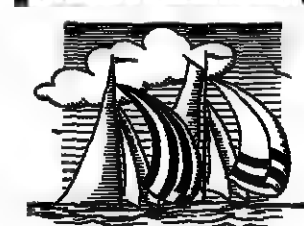
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£25,000 +	6.95%	6.74%	6.95%
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THE WEEK IN MONEY

DBS, the UK's biggest network of independent financial advisers, has agreed to pay some of the administration costs of the personal pensions review on behalf of its firms. The company had decided to bear additional costs of £1.2 million after member firms threatened to leave the network. DBS has already been fined £425,000 by the Personal Investment Authority for its slow progress in reviewing personal pension mis-selling cases. DBS expects the review to cost it £3.4 million for the year to March 31, 1998.

□ The Post Office and Lloyd's-TSB have struck a deal that paves the way for the Post Office to become a leading force in delivery of high street financial services. The link-up between the bank and Post Office Counters will initially allow Lloyd's-TSB customers to carry out a limited range of banking transactions at 20 local offices, including cash withdrawals and cheque deposits. Trials will soon be under way and both sides hope the relationship will develop into a full banking service available to Lloyd's-TSB's 15 million customers at any of the Post Office's 19,200 local offices. The Post Office has persistently pressed for more commercial freedom so as to permit full-scale expansion and to let it operate overseas.

□ Liverpool Victoria, which sells savings and insurance policies door-to-door, suspended its entire sales force indefinitely on Tuesday. The move is costing the friendly society £1 million in lost business for every month the sales team is off the road and affects all 230 financial advisers and 40 managers. Staff are being compensated for loss of earnings. The Bournemouth society relocated from London and underwent a substantial restructuring last year. This involved 1,000 redundancies and the recruitment of a large number of new staff. The suspension is due, the society said, to the discovery of gaps in references for new staff and in training and competence of existing advisers.

CGT ALLOWANCES — SEPTEMBER 1997

The indexed rise for calculating the indexation allowance on assets disposed of in September 1997

Month purchased	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
January	-	0.928	0.834	0.747	0.656	0.563	0.542	0.435
February	-	0.920	0.827	0.733	0.641	0.547	0.526	0.428
March	1.006	0.917	0.825	0.732	0.640	0.546	0.525	0.419
April	0.986	0.890	0.797	0.704	0.611	0.518	0.506	0.394
May	0.992	0.892	0.790	0.697	0.604	0.511	0.500	0.385
June	0.946	0.878	0.786	0.693	0.600	0.507	0.494	0.380
July	0.946	0.868	0.778	0.685	0.592	0.500	0.483	0.378
August	0.945	0.859	0.771	0.678	0.585	0.492	0.476	0.378
September	0.946	0.861	0.768	0.675	0.582	0.489	0.470	0.368
October	0.937	0.848	0.757	0.664	0.571	0.478	0.458	0.355
November	0.937	0.838	0.748	0.655	0.562	0.469	0.448	0.344
December	0.931	0.833	0.743	0.650	0.557	0.464	0.444	0.341

Month purchased	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
January	0.933	0.824	0.715	0.606	0.497	0.388	0.279	0.170
February	0.933	0.817	0.708	0.599	0.490	0.381	0.272	0.163
March	0.912	0.812	0.703	0.594	0.485	0.376	0.267	0.158
April	0.879	0.779	0.670	0.561	0.452	0.343	0.234	0.125
May	0.882	0.782	0.673	0.564	0.455	0.346	0.237	0.128
June	0.857	0.757	0.648	0.539	0.430	0.321	0.212	0.103
July	0.858	0.758	0.649	0.540	0.431	0.322	0.213	0.104
August	0.844	0.744	0.635	0.526	0.417	0.308	0.199	0.090
September	0.844	0.744	0.635	0.526	0.417	0.308	0.199	0.090
October	0.822	0.722	0.613	0.504	0.395	0.286	0.177	0.068
November	0.822	0.722	0.613	0.504	0.395	0.286	0.177	0.068
December	0.822	0.722	0.613	0.504	0.395	0.286	0.177	0.068

The 12 month rise for disposals by individuals on or after April 6, 1985 (April 1, 1985 for companies) is the month in which the allowable expenditure was incurred, or March 1982 where the expenditure was incurred before that month.

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Caroline Merrell examines the problems facing Britain's women at the end of their working lives, as



Marilyn Cunningham eventually won compensation from the Prudential after a series of errors with her pension.

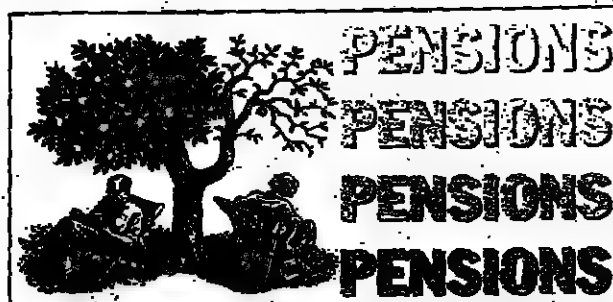
Words of warning for the poorer sex

Women may no longer be deemed to be the weaker sex, but in old age they tend to be the poorer. In the past, their pensions have been whittled away by circumstance. Even if they had been in full-time employment for a proportion of their working life, they may have taken time off to bring up children, slipped in to part-time work or been paying reduced national insurance contributions.

Any gap or reduction in NI payment can lead to a reduced basic and state earnings related pension (Serps) while, despite recent legal cases, many part-time workers are still excluded from company schemes. According to Baroness Hollis of Heigham, in a statement to the House of Lords, 3.1 million of the 3.5 million who do not qualify for the full basic pension of £62 per week are women.

Divorce can also deprive women of access to a pension. Until recently, no provision was made for pensions splitting at divorce. The former wives or husbands of those with generous occupational or government schemes did not receive any benefit from these schemes after they divorced the scheme member. New rules governing pensions splitting at the point of divorce are unlikely to be implemented until next year.

All these factors have conspired to produce the ever-growing band of women who have to claim income support



in their old age. According to the Trades Union Congress 1.5 million female pensioners claim income support. Statistics from the Department of Social Security show that the average gross income for women in retirement is £138. On average about £82.30 of this is benefit. Only an average of £25 from this sum will come from occupational pensions.

The TUC recently ran a helpline to try to raise awareness of the problems faced by women in retirement. In its first week more than 100,000 women phoned for advice. However, the overwhelming number of calls meant that only 2,000 could be dealt with. The TUC is now asking the Government to establish a telephone helpline to meet this demand.

An analysis of calls showed that the Government provides queries about the state pension. Some women, for example, were still opting to pay reduced NI contributions, the so-called "married woman's small stamp". This option,

taken up by 700,000 women, was abolished in 1997. Those who took it up will automatically receive a smaller state pension – the assumption was that their husband's NI contributions would be enough to provide a pension for both.

The TUC also found that women were not aware that taking a career break could have a big impact on their NI record and on their final state pension.

Many of those who had less than a full NI record did not realise that it was possible to accrue extra state pension by paying increased contributions, nor did women realise that a pensions forecast was available from the Department of Social Security, giving an estimated value of the state and basic pension.

The TUC said: "Many callers were genuinely unaware that the Government provides this valuable service." Some women, who were looking after dependants other than children, did not realise that they were entitled to home responsibilities protection

(HRP), a benefit that means their entitlement to the basic pension would not be reduced because they are not working.

For women who are members of occupational schemes, the helpline showed that there was a lack of awareness about how to top up the schemes.

Surveys show that 90 per cent of people retiring with pensions that pay them less than the two thirds of final salary that is allowed by the Inland Revenue. The TUC said that there was a lot of confusion about additional voluntary contribution (AVCs) plans and personal equity plans (PEPs) as a means of topping up pension provisions.

Under pensions legislation, occupational schemes must offer members AVC plans that allow more pension benefits to be built up. AVC plans benefit from tax relief on their contributions, while PEPs currently enjoy tax relief on their gains and on their income.

The TUC also received many calls from self-employed women, who had not yet bought a personal pension. It found that many were distrustful of independent financial advisers, the quality of advice they gave and of the financial services industry in general.

The TUC said: "It was clear that many women had expected to be able to rely on their husband for a secure retirement and, all too late in many cases, discovered that this would not be the case."

Another dissatisfied customer

Alarmed by the prospect of a down-trodden old age, women are increasingly seeing additional voluntary contribution (AVC) schemes as a means of supplementing their often poor pension provision.

AVCs are offered by most employer pension schemes but the task of investing the money is subcontracted to insurance companies. The Prudential, the largest insurer, is responsible for the teachers' AVC scheme but not all its 130,000 members are satisfied, as the Weekend Money postbag reveals.

Marilyn Cunningham, a teacher from Letchworth, became a member of the Pru scheme last Christmas. Mrs Cunningham

knows something about pensions, because her husband works in the industry. Having been concerned by tales of less than exemplary administration at the Pru, she sought and received assurances that these problems had been resolved. However, she has found the Pru's service imperfect in almost every aspect.

The errors began almost at once. Her £2,210 contribution was not immediately invested and then was put into the wrong fund. Without authority, the Prudential asked her colleague to deduct 9 per cent of her salary each month to pay her contributions, although Mrs Cunningham was making single premium payments. This took Mrs Cunningham over the Inland

Revenue's limits, a detail not identified by the Pru's systems. Mrs Cunningham said: "I had the impression that my complaints were of no concern to them and that I was being unreasonable in expecting explanations of their actions rather than meaningless platitudes by way of apology."

The Pru concedes that she received a "poor level of service" and is prepared to pay compensation. A spokesman said: "We have experienced problems with the administration of our teachers' AVC scheme but we have worked hard and invested in new technology to ensure these problems do not arise again."

ANNE ASHWORTH

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Be prepared
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THE TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Green pensions bloom

The public is changing its attitude over
pension investment, says Susan Emmett

The Prime Minister's vision of a giving age, in a new compassionate Britain, is already being translated in a radical change in public attitudes towards pension investment. But among many, the desire to see their pension fund managers steer clear of companies with poor ethical and environmental records is tempered by wanting normal returns.

The typical concerned pension investor is a middle-class professional who recycles rubbish, buys fair trade products, gives to charity and is a member of the National Trust. As many women as men invest ethically and a third are under 45.

Close to 30 per cent of adults believe that their pension should operate an ethical policy, even at the risk of reduced payouts, according to a survey published today by the Ethical Investment Research Service (Eiris). A further 44 per cent gave a more guarded response, saying their pension managers should operate an ethical policy so long as it did not mean lower returns.

The Eiris survey into ethical pensions revealed that armaments, animal testing and the environment were the three areas of most concern. Some 57 per cent objected to their pension fund investing in companies that make weapons, the same number wished to avoid those which test products on animals, and 54 per cent shunned companies breaking environmental regulations.

The swing towards ethical pensions is predicted to swell

the amounts in green funds which are today worth £1.4 billion compared with £672 million in 1994.

Although some believe that ethical pensions will never appeal to anything more than a select minority, Hugh Cuthbert, investment controller for NPI Global Care, one of the insurance groups offering ethical pensions, disagrees. He does not believe that investing as conscience dictates limits choice and increases risk. "People are really beginning to make investments according to what they believe and at the

same time make money. Ethical funds operate on two levels — by avoiding companies which compromise the investor's concerns and supporting those which make a positive contribution to society.

Ethical funds steer away from industries and companies which are involved in the alcohol or tobacco trade, pollute the environment, test cosmetics on animals, exploit the Third World or encourage pornography. Instead support is given to company groups that promote equal opportunities, have a good track record

on the environment and offer fair wages.

Although some managers of company schemes currently avoid investment in certain sectors, no company schemes are officially ethical and some experts do not believe the ethical investment market is big enough to accommodate large pension funds.

Anne Simpson, joint managing director of the Pensions and Investment Research Consultants (Pirc), said: "The notion that major pension funds will disinvest from main industries is for the birds. It's not practical, there are questionable returns to consider and if you really want to change a company, you have to take a hands-on approach."

Under current practice, trustees could be at risk legally if they do not obtain the best possible returns for fundholders. But John Rogers, director of investment services for the National Association of Pension Funds, argues that public mood is changing and for some employers money is not the only issue.

He said: "The area where the closest attention is being given to ethical issues is in the public sector. The swing from Conservative-run councils to Labour ones has led a lot of councillors to look at issues other than purely financial returns. A number of local authorities' pension funds have part of their portfolios in ethical funds."

Various big life companies now offer ethical pension funds, including NPI, Scottish Equitable, Friends Provident,

Clerical Medical, Abbey Life and Equitable Life.

Friends Provident sees its success as a combination of good performance and increasing awareness of ethical issues among the public. "People's awareness of ethical issues is growing. Most customers are not investing for a fast buck but as a logical extension of their lifestyle and concerns about the world," said Phil White, of Friends Provident Stewardship.

The company avoids 60 per cent of the All-share index, for example. Big oil companies such as BP and Shell and large pharmaceutical groups such as Glaxo are well off the list because of bad environmental records and animal testing. Some companies are left out for reasons which are not immediately obvious. A contract with the Ministry of Defence kept BT off the list while Cadbury Schweppes is shunned for Camelot connections.

Nigel Webb, of Equitable Life, said: "The most important thing that people need to realise about ethical funds is that wherever you restrict investment freedom you are then increasing the risk. People have to realise that ethical funds are more likely to be volatile. It can significantly reduce or significantly enhance your pension."

Taking a positive approach when picking a portfolio is the key, according to NPI's Mr Cuthbert. "We invest for the positive aspects of a company, by what they are doing that is making a positive contribution. So by adopting that approach and doing our own research we find there is no shortage of stocks at all."

The NPI Global Care fund, launched in 1994, is now worth £11.8 million and its success has spawned a second ethical pension fund, The Global Care Managed Fund started in 1996 and now manages £2.5 million.



The typical ethical pension investor is a professional who buys fair trade products and approves of fashion from recycled tyres

Finance industry cries 'foul'

The UK financial services industry is on collision course with the Government after suggestions that ministers may be ignoring its role in the proposed introduction of the new individual savings account.

After the Chancellor's Budget announcement that the Isa would be launched in April 1998, the Government called for a consultation period giving the finance industry until the end of the year to put its views forward on the format of the new savings scheme and how it should operate. However, a report in the Financial Times on Thursday gave specific details of how the Isa is expected to take shape, leading to suggestions from some quarters that the Government has already decided how the savings scheme will work.

The report said that the Isa, which is due to launch in April 1998, will allow up

to £10,000 a year to be invested in a range of vehicles, including National Savings, cash and equity schemes like unit trusts, perhaps with a limit on how much an individual can save in the scheme over a lifetime. It also suggested that tax relief on income into the funds would be reduced from 20 to 10 per cent, while capital gains would continue to be allowed to roll up without any tax penalty.

Despite strong denials from the Inland Revenue and the Treasury that any proposals for Isas have been produced, a senior finance industry figure said that the information in the FT report is believed to have reflected very closely a document passed to Treasury MPs by Inland Revenue officials on Tuesday.

If this is the case it is likely to infuriate the many UK financial services companies that have spent time and money liaising with the Government in the belief

that their views would shape the make-up of the Isa.

Isas are widely expected to replace Peps and Tessas, despite the fact that both tax-beneficial schemes have proved popular with UK savers. However, there has been no confirmation that Peps and Tessas will be scrapped, leaving the general public in the dark about what will happen to their savings, and product providers and financial advisers confused as to whether they should still be selling the investments.

Roddy Kohn, of the Bristol financial adviser Kohn Cougar, says the situation needs to be sorted out. "There are critical long-term issues involved here, as well as short-term ones, and if people are putting time and effort into voicing their opinions it seems very unreasonable that they are not being considered," he says.

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THE TIMES

WEEKEND

SATURDAY OCTOBER 18 1997

Goodness gracious me...

The Queen's tour of Pakistan and India turned into a right royal argy-bargy.

Christopher Thomas apportions blame

So whose fault was it? For two weeks the Queen has been dragged through the swamp of hate that passes for India-Pakistan relations. She has been humiliated, misinterpreted and misused. Never has she been required to utter a speech so loaded with political innuendo as the one she delivered at a state banquet in Pakistan, in which she stomped over a minefield of Indian sensibilities and set off an explosion that will generate heat and smoke long after she has left. This has been her fortnight of tribulation.

Anglo-Indian relations have suffered, the reputation of the British Foreign Office has sunk, and the royal trip overseas since the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, produced as much grief as goodwill. The proof of damage lies in Pakistan's smugness. How, it inquired, could the Indian prime minister call Britain a third-rate power that had no right to intervene in internal Indian affairs? Britain, it further ventured, was a recognised world power, to boot, a permanent member of the Security Council. When Pakistan gushes thus about Britain of all countries, there must be something serious afoot. And there is.

The enormity of what the Queen did at a state banquet in Pakistan is not apparent in the words, which seemed anodyne enough: surely, she inquired, it was time for India and Pakistan to settle their differences. "If countries in the region are a goal and understand that working together they give themselves a better chance of achieving it, then historical hostilities can be buried for good."

In the context of the corrosive relationship between the two countries these simple words became an attack on India, not only from the Queen of Great Britain and Northern Ireland but, more seriously, from the head of the Commonwealth. Her implicit message was that the two countries to settle the Kashmir dispute. Islamabad was flummoxed. Delhi went mad. India now that talk of a permanent

settlement in Muslim-majority Kashmir implies secession, because that is what most Kashmiri Muslims want. The subject must therefore be kept off the international agenda at all costs. And here comes the Queen, on a goodwill visit at that, talking to the world about Kashmir — albeit implicitly — as though it were a friendly thing to do.

Murphy's Law was at work the whole fortnight. The Queen was bound to make India suspicious by going to Pakistan first, and Delhi followed her every move and utterance for any hint of a pro-Pakistan position on Kashmir from the new British Government.

Suspicious rose when a junior minister was heard to say in Brighton at the Labour Party conference that there should be a plebiscite in Kashmir to determine its future. And didn't Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, who accompanied the Queen, tell Pakistani officials that Britain was ready to act as mediator over Kashmir if both sides desired?

He denied saying any such thing, so the Pakistan Government ensured that the official news agency put out a story contradicting him.

Didn't Mr Cook also say the very same words to Pakistani journalists at an informal encounter? He says no, he never said that. What is more, he never gave a press conference or an official statement while in Pakistan. True, but he met Pakistani reporters, for all his denials. And he did say what he denied saying, or the notes in the pads of several journalists are wrong.

To offer mediation is to suggest third-party intervention, and in Delhi that equates to interference in domestic affairs. Inder Kumar Gujral, the Prime Minister, who was in Egypt at the time, laid into Britain so savagely that he was compelled later to deny saying what he said. "Our denial," an Indian External Affairs Ministry official ventured privately, "is as hollow as Robin Cook's." By now, the royal tour was mired in

'Murphy's Law was at work the whole visit'

Continued on page 2



The Queen keeping her cool in the Pakistan capital, Islamabad, where she had been required to make a speech loaded with political innuendo

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'We are not offended, nor do we feel snubbed'

BYLAN MARTINEZ/REUTERS



Treading softly: the Queen walks into the minefield of Indian politics after padding around Faisal Mosque in blue socks

Continued from page 1
questions about who said what to whom, what they meant and whether they said it. When the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh landed in Delhi last Sunday night after a weekend resting in the Pakistani hill resort of Murree, the mood was already angry.

Sir David Gore-Booth, the British High Commissioner, had earlier spoken to reporters over but Indian newspapers went wild with his quotes, taking him out of context and fuelling the fires.

"The Indian press is almost as licentious as our own," Sir David told me in Madras. "I find some of the reaction more invented than real. The Indian press, like the British press, is always on the lookout for gaffes and bloopers."

Indian newspapers undeniably had fun this week, with official blessing. The Times of India chose a couple of sharp quotes for its regular quote-of-the-day selection in the masthead on the front page, including one from the late Malcolm Muggeridge describing the Queen as frumpy and banal. Other newspapers were in much the same "up-you" frame of mind, and vitriol dripped from their stories.

Then there was the silly affair of the Royal Marines band, which had been brought out from Britain to play at events in Pakistan and India throughout the tour. It was to have played at the National Museum in Delhi when the Queen attended an exhibition, but Indian officials ordered the musicians to stay away.

They had some complaint about noise in a confined space, but the perception spread that Delhi was being bloody-minded.

In an earlier incident, a snub perhaps, Indian officials issued a last-minute instruction to reduce the number of British guests at Monday's state banquet from 20 to ten, without formally giving an explanation. That meant Sir David was the only British diplomat present. Word went round that Delhi must really be upset when it dis-invited them to dinner and silenced their brass band.

The cancellation of the Queen's planned speech — or rather an after-dinner toast, which is really all it was — in Madras, the capital of Tamil Nadu, at a dinner with the state governor, dragged matters into realms of absurdity. Britain or India lied: there was no reconciling their respective statements, the former claiming that some remarks had long been planned and announced, the latter saying no they hadn't and the Queen can't speak anyway because she is allowed only one speech per state visit.

It is, indeed, normal Indian practice that a visiting head of state speaks publicly only once, at the state banquet, and the British side was plainly unaware of this.

The Queen had planned to reply to the Tamil Nadu governor in the blandest of

terms for only a few minutes, during which she would have praised his state and said thank you for a fine meal. Delhi's veto, another pinprick, could have been avoided without fuss had the mood been friendlier, but coming on top of everything else it seemed to throw Anglo-Indian relations into a spin — an absurd outcome for the non-delivery of a non-speech.

"We are not offended, nor do we feel snubbed," Buckingham Palace proclaimed later. It unsavily sought to fix the blame on a mix-up between Tamil Nadu and the federal government, but Delhi would have none of it. The mistake was Britain's. London knew the rules and if it didn't it should have. The Queen cannot say anything; she cannot toast. Crisis and farce now came together.

"The Brits still think they rule the world," a Congress Party official declared. All of official Delhi harmonised with the Britishing chorus, cheered on by a cascade of hostile newspaper headlines that found fault in everything. The Duke of Edinburgh's assertion that the number of deaths in the Amritsar massacre by Britain's General Reginald Dyer in 1919 had been exaggerated drew derision, even though he was right. The sign at the site says there were 2,000 martyrs: the official death toll announced by the Hunter Commission set up to inquire into

the slaughter, whose findings have been generally undisputed for nearly eight decades, is just under 400, with 1,200 wounded.

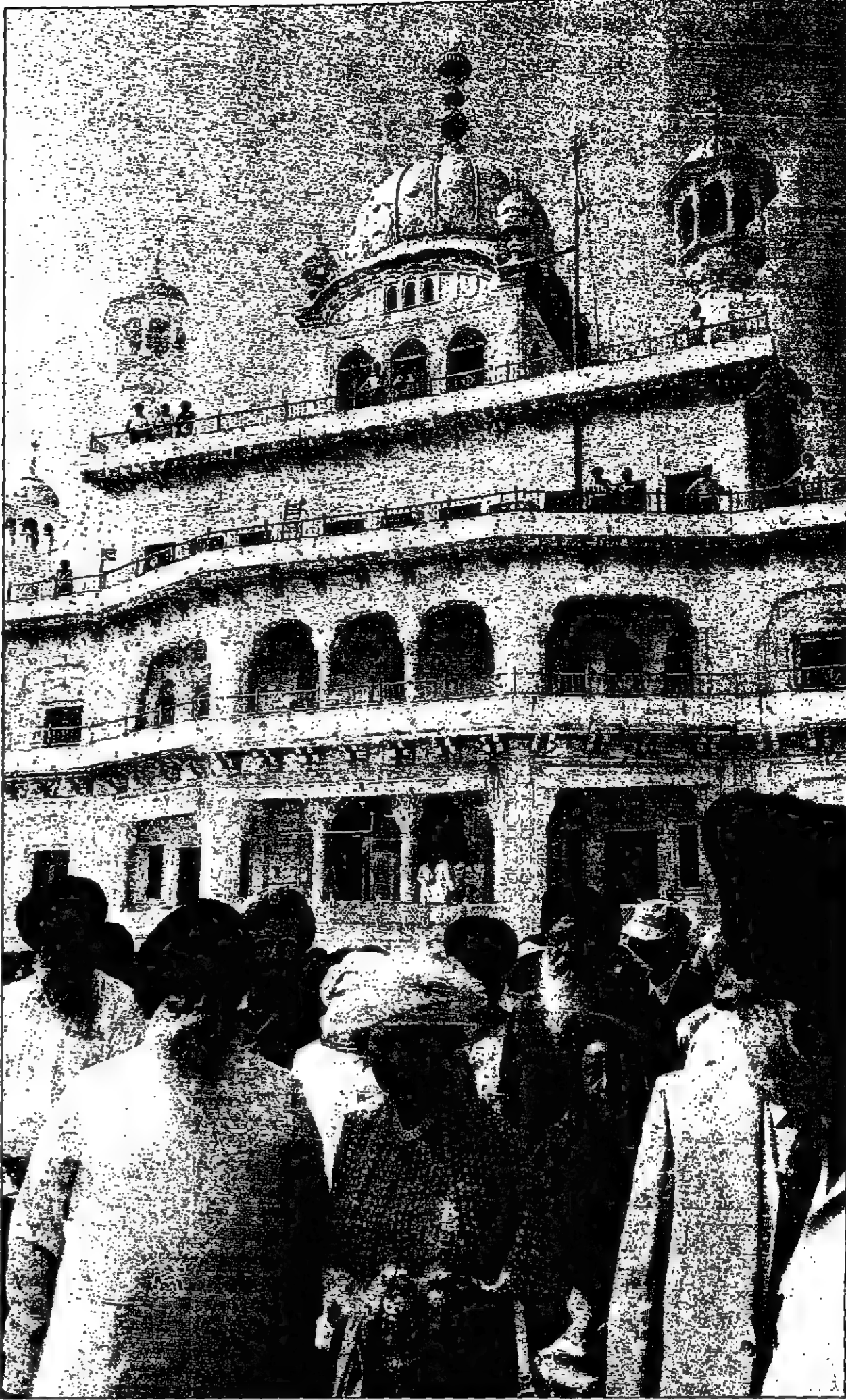
The Duke may have been right, but he was unwise, and the Indian press went for him.

Everything had started so well: here was the Queen in Pakistan, padding around Faisal Mosque in Islamabad in what looked like British Airways-issue blue socks clashing with a canary-yellow outfit and giving the world a harmless, human image. There was the Duke in the hills of the far north chatting to schoolchildren and asking if they could find England on the map.

The atmosphere was warm. The Queen told Benazir Bhutto that Pakistanis in Britain worked so hard. The two women beamed at each other. The Queen even managed to wring a few words out of Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister, the world's only taciturn politician.

She was altogether a hit in the exalted circles in which she mostly moved; grassroots people never even got close, which stole any chance of an unexpected gesture to take the starch out of the programme, although the visit to the Sikhs' Golden Temple in Amritsar was an occasion of exceptional grassroots enthusiasm, despite reports to the contrary in the Indian press.

Whether the controversial sections of the Queen's speech slipped through the net without being recognised as explosive, or whether they were inserted deliberately to try to force movement by India over Kashmir, is known only to a



The Queen's visit to the Sikhs' Golden Temple in Amritsar was an occasion of exceptional grassroots enthusiasm

few. A senior Palace official said: "The old, technical position is that the Queen is here on the advice of ministers in Britain. She does not go out on a limb." This, in Palace-speak, seemed to plant responsibility for the Pakistan speech on the Foreign Office, which drafted it with input from the British High Commission in Islamabad as well as the Palace. Sir David acknowledged Pakistan's obvious pleasure at the

turn of events. "It must be laughing all the way to the bank, but that is a problem for the Indians rather than for us. Pakistan is delighted with anything that appears to upset the relationship between India and Britain."

Was it wrong for the Queen to raise the Kashmir issue? "It would have been extremely odd if the Queen were in Pakistan and did not refer to what is for the Pakistanis the core

issue," Sir David said. And what is the British Government's policy on Kashmir? "If at any time both sides wanted it, we would be prepared to offer our good offices. Since at the present time only one side wants our good offices, they are unlikely to be called on."

Whether by design or accident, the Queen is a guiltless victim. She must be glad to be flying out of the torrid heat of South Asian politics and

super-sensitivities today, for all the insistence by Palace officials that she has had a wonderful time.

The real point of her visit, to cement relations, promote trade and increase understanding, was lost in this febrile fortnight. Others must now sort out the mess they made her make.

Royals and Reptiles
Vision, page 9

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Tantrums and tiaras on other terrible tours

Should you ever find yourself in idle cocktail-hour chit-chat with the Queen on the subject of her travels, try at all costs never to mention the word "Morocco". Her expression is likely to turn at once to the consistency of old leather.

Not since Hope and Crosby were shipwrecked on the North African shore in 1942 has there been such a catalogue of misadventure in the Sahara. The Queen's 1980 state visit to King Hassan II still ranks as the all-time turkey of royal tours.

The king cancelled a welcome lunch for his guests, then proposed last-minute alterations to a programme which had been a year or

more in construction. He drove the Queen and Prince Philip into the desert, abandoned them in a tent without food or drink in 90-degree heat and retired to his air-conditioned caravan.

There was worse. The king forced his guest to watch falcons ripping up defenceless birds, served pigeons for breakfast, and turned up nearly an hour late for the return state banquet on board Britannia. The Queen tapped an impatient toe, our xenophobic tabloids were moved to fury, and British diplomats fumed in impotent rage.

The historic visit to China in 1986, setting the seal on Britain's eventual



The Queen in Morocco, getting to grips with local timekeeping

return of Hong Kong, suffered a spanner in the well-oiled works when the Duke of Edinburgh let slip an injudicious wisecrack about slitty eyes. Diplomats could not be blamed for that.

Her equally epoch-making visit to Russia in 1994 also went a mile awry

at one stage. Staff at the British Embassy in Moscow, had spent months planning a photo-opportunity — the Queen and Boris Yeltsin going walkabout through crowds of thousands in Red Square.

The Queen, who had been touring the art treasures of the Kremlin,

emerged through the great gate accompanied by Yeltsin and Yuri Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow, ready to acknowledge the cheers and press the Muscovite flesh.

But the vast space of Red Square was empty, save for a small knot of British newsmen and a stray dog. At the last minute, Red Square had been closed on Yeltsin's orders; the president was suffering one of his periodic bouts of mass unpopularity, and he feared a demonstration against himself taking the shine off the royal visit.

Functionaries were despatched to a far corner to pass orders to a policeman coralling the crowd in a side street. Barriers were lifted and a crowd of very nearly 30 was allowed in. The Queen made a beeline for them, hoping for an encounter with an ordinary Russian citizen. But no such luck: the crowd was a party of language students — from Glasgow.

ALAN HAMILTON

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This is the sound of the suburbs



Despite their respectable image, the suburbs have provided English culture with some of its most daring and innovative personalities. From left: Quentin Crisp, Jarvis Cocker, Noel Coward, Siouxsie of the Banshees and David Bowie

Forget
Carnaby Street
— style started
in the suburbs,
says Michael
Bracewell

Suburbia, despite its charm and mystery, has always had a bad press. Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, in his *Guide to the Historic Buildings of England*, would always be particularly sniffy about what he described as "mass-produced housing", and would only tolerate what he grandly referred to as the "high-class suburbs" of Richmond or Kew. If that was not enough, the very word "suburban" has become synonymous with a lack of taste, or even vulgarity.

Only on Wednesday this newspaper reported the war of taste being fought in the leafy lanes of Great Budworth, Cheshire, where an unfortunate houseowner has provoked rebellion among his neighbours for making his property look "too suburban".

But despite the outward respectability of English suburbia, there is a seam of anarchy and high passion; and for every supposedly moderate suburbanite there is an adjacent depth of scandal that would make Caligula blush.

Although London and the main cities are seen to be the

launch-pads of provocative fashions, decadent art and pop outrage, the laboratory in which their rockets are made are the miles of seemingly docile suburbs that surround them. English suburbia, if you like, is the factory of disaffection. From Quentin Crisp and Noel Coward, to David Bowie, Malcolm McLaren and Siouxsie and the Banshees, the suburbs have provided English culture with some of its most innovative personalities.

Their particular school of rebellion has been founded upon a need to revolt against the very obedience and anony-

mity which the suburbs impose. As well as providing the principal market for Do-It-Yourself, suburbia has also fostered Destroy-It-Yourself as the answering attitude.

The morality plays of suburbia have been those situation comedies in which the protagonist believes they deserve more from life than enduring the rat race. At their best, most notably Tony Hancock's bitter monologues from *Railway Cuttings*, *East Cheam*, and *The Rise and Fall of Reginald Perrin*, these comedies describe frustrated acts of suburban rebellion. Hancock would develop his character into the would-be bohemian artist of *The Rebel*, and Leonard Rossiter's Reggie Perrin would have to fake his own suicide before founding his Grot shops. The comic and the tragic, it would seem, are always close in the best depictions of suburbia. For the early rebels, as described by the novelist E.M. Forster (who was bitterly unhappy at Tonbridge School), there was the belief that suburbia was a compromised land "where

success was indistinguishable from failure" and all of its moderate values a sham. Crisp, "the naked civil servant" who subscribes to the notion that the best act of rebellion is to do nothing at all, was the archetypal high priest of suburban rebellion. The former art school model, who achieved celebrity and notoriety in more or less equal parts by the hugely successful dramatisation of his autobiography, *The Naked Civil Servant*, in 1976, was born in Sutton, Surrey, in 1908. He announces his reaction to this fact in the opening chapter with an ennu which anticipates the sullen post of punk rock at its most bristling. "As soon as I stepped out of my mother's womb, I realised that I had made a mistake."

For Crisp — as a homosexual who displayed inordinate, if misguided, bravery in tottering off to the metropolis wearing make-up at a time when most

males would commute with a dab of grease in their hair — the need to rebel against the semi-detached kingdom of his childhood was prompted by a deep sense of anguish, which led him to state that if the suburbs would not tolerate a person like him, he would no longer tolerate the suburbs. Coward, perhaps Crisp's spiritual father, who was born not far away in Teddington, would mark the advance of the suburban rebel away from an eccentric sense of style and into the arms of a refined dandyism. His mask of urbanity was a way of recreating himself

of using fashion as a passport to freedom.

Later, in the Pop Ages, beyond the austerity years of "making do and getting by" which the Second World War had demanded, the cult of the suburban dandy would take fresh strength from Mods. While the Teddy Boys had

ruled the streets of London's inner suburbia in the 1950s, dressing in a bastardised version of English Edwardiana that was retro in all but its implied violence, the Mods took their style from the latest designs. To keep up with these fashions, the Mods would commute between the suburbs and the tailors of Soho.

Such was the formative experience of Marc Bolan, whose family moved from Stoke Newington to Summerstown — between Wimbledon and Tooting — and David Bowie, whose teenage years were spent in Bromley, Kent. And, in many ways, it was the dismal bedroom out in the suburbs, and its distance from the exciting world of fashionable London, which drove these teenage Mods to become the flamboyant pop heroes of Glam Rock.

Most important of all, Bowie and Bolan turned pop fashion into a form of protest which had more relevance in the suburbs than the hippy costumes of rainbow-coloured robes. They were closer to the sharp street style of *A Clock-*

work *Orange* than the navel-gazing of *Tangerine Dream*. As Glam Rock was a suburban invention, so too was its only child, Punk Rock. Malcolm McLaren and Jamie Reid — the men behind the Sex Pistols — met at Croydon Art College in 1968. In 1970, Reid co-founded the anarchist community magazine *Suburban Press*; its aim was to expose the supposed corruption in Croydon town council, but its violent style was a form of political collage which showed an apocalyptic suburbia stalked by boredom.

Thus, in Croydon, the

school of punk slogan-making which the Sex Pistols would scream around the world — "Keep Warm This Winter; Cause Trouble", for instance — was created out of the boredom of the suburbs rather than the sophistication of the King's Road. Siouxsie Sioux, the breathlessly glamorous diva of Siouxsie and the Banshees, was a former Glam Rock girl from Bromley. She had already raised eyebrows in Croydon by walking into a pub dressed in erotic clothes, leading her friend on a dog leash. In Crawley, Robert Smith was smuggling his lipstick and having his depressive vision to sell millions of records by his band, The Cure. In *Vile Bodies*, Evelyn Waugh's novel about Mayfair's Bright Young Things during the 1920s, there is a telling scene in which the sophisticated young Londoners are forced to visit the suburbs. At Croydon's aerodrome, where an airship has been hired for a party, the terminally bored Nina ascends in a haze of gin fumes to gaze down on the rows of neat suburban villas — a view which prompts her to say: "I think I'm going to be sick."

This comment may be commonplace, but it is not necessarily a fair one. For better or worse, the suburbs have provided a rich seam of British culture, famous for its cartoon anarchy and a glamour born of the ordinary.

At Acadia Avenue, a celebration of suburbia, from today until October 20 at the Festival Hall (0171-960 4242).

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Why the creator of Channel 4's hit programme fell for suburbia

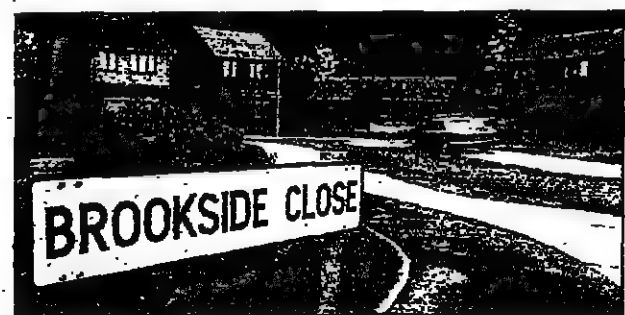
Natural home of the soap

Fifteen years ago I wanted to develop a television programme with a mix of characters that would allow me to reflect life in modern Britain. I wanted to write about things that reflected and affected the majority of people in the place they spend most of their time — real people in real houses in a realistic setting. It was, of course, suburbia.

All the great themes of drama can be summarised by births, deaths and marriages. These are what keep the media, the church, politicians and the emergency services in business. The place to look for these great themes is where the greatest mass of people live. This is suburbia.

Here can be found the demographic cocktail of people on their way up and down the social ladder. Different types and groups, but all proud of their gardens and cars and all wanting no mercy to keep up but to stay in front of their neighbours. That is the essence of society. That is the essence of soap.

Brookside is not about Liverpool. Nor is it supposed to be topical in the sense that it reflects the news headlines. But it is as close a reflection of the main issues flowing through society as I can achieve through my own



Suburbia: a rich ground for literary imagination to feast on

brand of fictional social engineering. To understand the bodies under the patio, the incest and the euthanasia, you have to understand what drives people: what they are grateful by, what they strive for.

Everyone wants social recognition. If people cannot achieve recognition by the traditional routes of education and career, they seek alternative paths. It is this desire to be socially recognised that fuels most human activity.

This is a rich mine for both drama and satire, but the desire to better oneself is also one of the motors of all social, economic, technological and political change. It is what lies beneath the desire for suburbia. It keeps the house-builders in business and the

pressure on the green belt. People always want more, and something better, perhaps through a socially acceptable route — Sheila Grant wanting further education; Harry Cross's collection of garden gnomes; Mick Johnson wanting to be a parent-governor.

If the urge to better oneself has driven the suburbanite since the first bonfire was installed in Neolithic suburbia — once one had it, they all had to have it — it is the development of transport which made the suburbia possible. The railways, and then the car, meant workers no longer had to live near their jobs. Instead of living in the shadow of the smoketack, they could head for home in

the rural tranquillity of the suburbs — the ideal place to spend time with the family. Of course, the more who did it, the less rural it became. And so began the urban sprawl.

Even today the rural idyll idea has lost none of its vigour. One recent opinion poll showed that more than 50 per cent of respondents considered themselves as living in the country, although their postal codes showed them on the urban rim — yet another example of social aspiration outweighing reality.

Suburbia today means car ownership. This is why all the *Brookside* houses have driveways and why the garage has become a focal set. As in real life, the *Brookside* garage has developed into a mini-supermarket, and in so doing caused the closure of Ron Dixon's grocery shop — another trauma on the suburban landscape.

J.G. Ballard said the suburbs are at "the cutting edge of social change". Hence it is one of the richest grounds for the literary imagination to feast on — from social revolution in Tooting and lace-curtained twittings in Penge to murder, incest and mercy killing in *Brookside*.

PHIL REDMOND

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Be devilish – set those greys afire

It's time to stride out in style, in the hottest, sexiest range of reds

Just a cursory look around our streets reveals the colour Britons adore: whether it's on our postboxes and phone kiosks, our buses and flag or our trooping guardsmen, we are a nation in love with red. And for once, Europeans have joined us in our national fervour – every designer at the autumn/winter collections draped the supermodels in various shades of its bright traffic-light hues, sexy scarlets, soft pinks. This wasn't the hard, chic red of the Eighties, when power-dressers and television presenters pumped up their own shoulders, and confidence, with hard, streamlined suits. This time it was sexy and vampish: the colour of danger, of fire, of the devil. And, unlike the Eighties, it was not just suits that got the treatment at the collections: Antonio Berardi's models strutted through a hellish setting in slashed leather dresses studded with diamonds; Nicole Farhi showed sumptuous velvet jackets embossed with shimmering red beads; Bella Freud flaunted low-cut scarlet suits lined with opulent strips of gold braid.

On the high streets this autumn, you can't miss the flaming colour. Every label has turned up the red heat to complement its obligatory grey separates, and whether you want a casual vest or a vampish one-shoulder dress, you won't have to walk far to find one. (If busy politicians such as Margaret Beckett and Mary Robinson can fill their wardrobes with reds, it can't be too time-consuming...)

If you cannot contemplate an entire outfit, opt for a dash of bright colour. "All you need is a splash of red," says Vicky Brandon, the head designer for Warehouse. "It could be a single item: an essential red-leather micro mini, a red boob tube, or a slip dress."

As the weather turns chilly, there is nothing more comforting than a colour that is positive and glowing. It is time to jump out of dull winter colours and into the fire.

LISA GRAINGER

BELOW LEFT: chiffon button-through shirt, £80; stretch satin miniskirt, £90; French Connection, nationwide (0171-399 7200); Knee-high velvet boots, £109, L.K. Bennett, 83 King's Road, SW3 (0171-352 9066)

BELOW RIGHT: boat-neck sweater, £365, Sonia Rykiel; Browns, 23-27 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-451 7839); Lace skirt, £99, Kavan Joni, 30 Byram Arcade, Westgate, Huddersfield, Yorkshire (01484 456312); Clip-on dangle earrings, £36, Agatha, 4 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-495 2779)



ABOVE: burgundy rayon top, £50, French Connection, nationwide (as before); Trousers, £95, Whistles, nationwide (0171-487 4484); Jacket, £129.99, Morgan, nationwide (0171-383 2888); Kitten-heel slingbacks, £145, Russell & Bromley, 24-26 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 6903); Red clutch bag, £80, Dollergand, Harrods, SW1 (0171-794 3028)

LEFT: lace beaded shirt with mandarin collar, £29.99, River Island, selected branches nationwide (0181-988 8622); Satin corset, £39.99, Gossard, department stores nationwide (01625 651122); Wool crepe trousers, £275, TSE (available January, 1998), Harvey Nichols, SW1 (0171-594 0011); Liberty, W1 (0171-263 4433); Drop earrings, £18, Agatha (as before)



THREE OF A KIND

The easiest step to instant glamour this season is a pair of killer heels. Whether they are silver spikes, kitten-like sandals or strapped with delicate thongs of leather, they have to be high, sexy and needle sharp. And, of course, red. L.G.



LEFT: ankle-tye suede shoes, £85, Bertie (0171-935 2002)
CENTRE: plum velvet closed-toe sandals, £295, Gina (0171-235 2932)
RIGHT: red satin-heeled sandals, £195, Jimmy Choo (0171-235 6008)

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GARDEN ANSWERS

STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q How do I eradicate or contain the many weeds which my large gravelled parking area seems to attract? We do it by hand but would prefer to use a good, safe, effective weedkiller. — M. Hanlon, Clifton, Bristol.

A Eradicating seedling weeds is much easier than dealing with established ones, especially tough species. If your hand work means the gravel is clear of weeds, then you could keep it so by using a combined weedkiller such as Weedol in early spring.

But if you have tough weeds like dandelions and thistles, then you would do better to start with a systemic weedkiller containing glyphosate such as Roundup, applied to new growth in spring. Then you can use combined mixtures to keep it free of weeds.

Q Does your gravel have hardcore underneath? An insufficiently thick layer of gravel over soil will always be weedy. A greener approach to weeding gravel, once the tough weeds are killed, is to run over it with a flame gun when there is a crop of seedlings to frazzle, but beware of frazzling plants around the edges.

A I have an old 25ft *Magnolia grandiflora*. It has bloomed well, but is shedding leaves and has some sort of rot at the base of the trunk. It is looking thin and sickly. I have pruned off the apparently dead branches, treated the base of the trunk, and given it a dose of bonemeal. What is wrong? — G.B. Stevens, Isleworth, Middlesex.

A A healthy *Magnolia grandiflora* should never look thin. It likes lots of heat, sun and moisture, and good soil to go with it. Then it makes a rounded evergreen tree the size of a sycamore, with perfumed flowers the size of plates —

perfect outside a great white ante-bellum cotton mansion. The tree does shed leaves, of course, and in summer, but even so it should not look thin as a result. New leaves should be more than compensate. I guess your tree is too dry at the root (I bet it is against a wall) and also dying from rot in the wood at the base. Feeding and painting over wet rot will do little to revive it. Watering and patience may just see it into its final golden afternoon.

Q We have a large pond which is almost choked with four varieties of water lily, leaving too little water to row our boat in. The pond is full of wildlife, so I am reluctant to use herbicides. For the past three years I have had the lilies culled by hand in spring, but my wife is refusing to do it again next year (I generally have a bad back in spring) on the grounds that it makes little difference. She is unmoved by my offer of chest-high waders for Christmas. Should I put my foot down, or can you suggest another solution? — Mr. R. Wade, Tenterden, Kent.

A The commitment of a dutiful wife is a wonderful thing. Whether or not she is clad in rubber, there are limits beyond which a wife should not be pushed. I suggest you get a man in next spring to pull out all the lilies, and replant with smaller, more manageable varieties, which will need to be grown in places where the water is only 18-20 in deep. The deeper the water, the more vigorous the lily. This should allow sufficient open water for any amount of boating and possibly even a little scuba-diving. You write as a man, I am sure, who is used to being in deep water.

Keep the gnome fires burning

'Little folk' may be naff, but we love 'em, says Paul Richardson

GNOME CELEBRITIES



Teresa Gorman, MP, used to have John Major and Baroness Thatcher gnomes. Writer Giles Brandreth has an adult-sized gnome outfit. Bill Oddie asked friends to give him gnomes instead of wedding presents

A Major gnome production

Herbaceous borders and prized flowers all die sooner or later but garden gnomes just seem to hang in there, immune to blight and rust, untouched by drought and frost. They are as ineradicably British as rain-soaked cricket matches and *The Archers*.

In fact the main threat to gnomes, apart from the enforcers of "Islington Tuscan" style, is from thieves. And serious British gnome-ophiles are concerned about a new trend — a ruthless Garden Gnome Liberation Front which was kidnapping the defenceless creatures across France last summer and releasing them in the wild to breed. If this foreign contagion was to spread across the Channel a national institution could be under threat.

Fortunately, the AA is fighting the foreign menace by publishing the *Complete Book of the Gnome* (£14.99), an in-depth study aimed at both the traditional enthusiast and at a younger generation just turning on to the kitsch possibilities of gnome ownership. The book, says Louise Bowden of the AA, contains "everything you ever wanted to know about gnomes but were afraid to ask". It includes an over-

Visitors to the Gnome Reserve in Devon are encouraged to become gnomes for a day



view of Little Folk throughout the European Union, a chapter on how to make your own garden figures, and a controversial "outing" of celebrity gnome-fanciers, including Teresa Gorman, the Conservative MP. It also reveals that Britons spend £80 million a year on garden ornaments, and that the biggest European manufacturer of gnomes, Hoffmann in Germany, made half a million of them last year.

Ann Atkins, the founder and owner of Britain's only Gnome Reserve, is unperturbed by changing notions of good and bad taste. Her 1,000 gnomes inhabit four acres near Bradworthy, north Devon. "Fashion comes and goes, but gnomes go on for ever," says Ms Atkins, who sees them as a powerful spiritual force for good. "They're childlike, yet wise. They're a weird mixture of the comic and the serious. For me, they're a link with the ecology of the planet, and you could argue that the fishing gnome is a symbol of human creativity."

Visitors to the gnome reserve — about 25,000 a year — are encouraged to wear gnome hats provided by Ms Atkins and her six employees. "With the hats on, people blend in with everything here. You're not yourself, you're a gnome for a

few hours," she says. Gnomes, as a garden accessory, were invented in the 1860s by the aristocrat and mystic Sir Charles Isham, who placed 150 of them around his rockery at Lamport House in Northamptonshire. The only survivor, known as Lampy, is now insured for £1 million.

The figures used to be made of sandstone or terracotta, and antique gnomes can fetch £800 to £1,000 at auction. Now they are more likely to be moulded from concrete, bonded marble, plaster or plastic, and may cost anything from £5 up to about £160 new. Ms Atkins's hand-made gnomes range from £150 to £400.

Poses and activities range from the classic wheelbarrow, pipe-smoking and hiking gnomes to estate agents, traffic wardens and Spice Girls. Topless, mooning and flasher gnomes have recently become popular among kitsch revivalists and shock-the-neighbour gardeners. One speciality gnome even has indirect royal approval: the Prince's Youth Trust has given a grant to a young entrepreneur who makes gnome funeral caskets — where better to stash the ashes of a deceased gardener? But the most popular, according to Bill Pye Gnomes, who finds homes for up to 12,000 every year, is still the "fishing" variety.

Celebrity gnome-owners are almost as shy as their charges but a few have bravely "come out". The singer-songwriter Ian Dury is partial to gnomes, relying on his wife to buy them from the Gnome Reserve in Devon. And, in defiance of the good-taste wedding list, the comic actor and birdwatcher Bill Oddie, a rather goblin-like character himself, asked each of his guests for a garden gnome.

In the hit film *The Full Monty*, Gerald (played by Tom Wilkinson) has a garden crammed with gnomes and is teased mercilessly — unjustly, as the film makes clear — for his



Ron Broomfield has 800 gnomes, not all as innocent as they seem

innocent delight in them. Gerald's view has influential supporters, including the former prime minister's brother, Terry Major-Ball, who takes "great heart" from the success of gnomes because, he says, "in many ways I equate their struggle with that of the ordinary hard-working man up and down Britain".

Gnome-loving may be about as socially acceptable as paedophilia in some sections of British society, but all the signs are that a kind of Gnome Liberation is already happening in Britain.

When positioning gnomes in the garden, fanciers say that we should remember that they are social creatures. They do not look natural standing alone and should be placed in groups of three or more. Gnomes tend to do well, they say, when partially hidden by foliage or low

branches, or appearing to peek from behind plants. The London design store Wong Singh Jones sells a zinc-plated mini gnome, which it says is perfect for hiding under small plants in city windowboxes.

Ron Broomfield, who has more than 800 gnomes in the garden of his cottage in Lincolnshire, has several of them "fishing" in a small ornamental pond. But, he warns, care should be taken with these particular gnomes, which may not always be as innocent as they seem.

A visitor to his house once accidentally stabbed herself in the leg with one of their fishing rods, and subsequently died. With friends like that, who needs the Wicked Witch of the West?

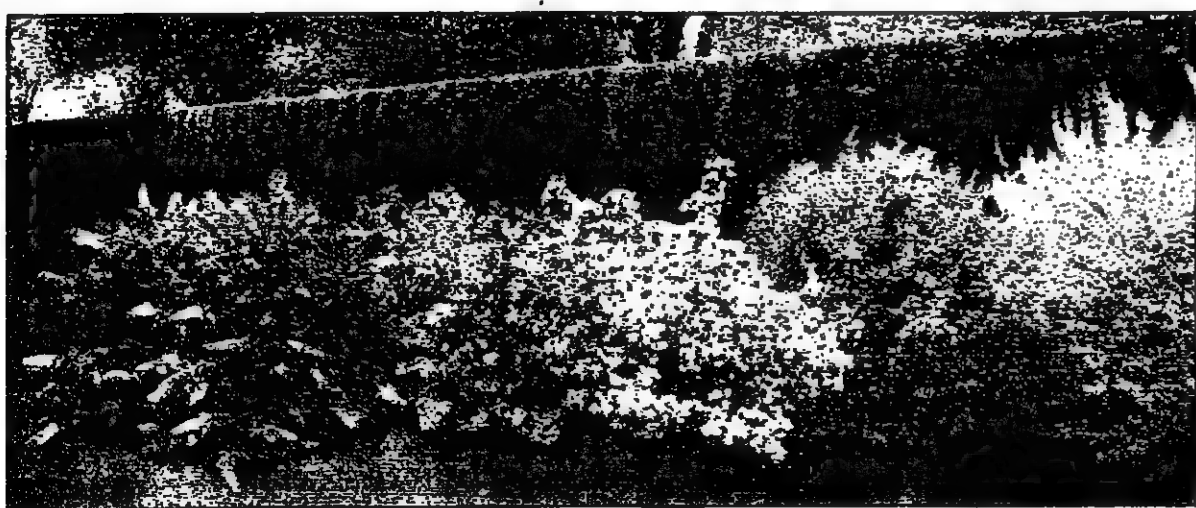
• The Gnome Reserve is at West Bradworthy, north Devon. EX22 7XE (phone/fax 01409 244435).

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To complete this collection there are five different shrubs which bloom between March and October: *Buddleia* — with its purple plumes, growing 9-10ft; *Forsythia* — with a mass of yellow blossom up to 6ft high; *Lonicera* — deep pink, flowering May/June and red berries in July/August; growing to between 6-8ft; *Philadelphus* — with a double white flower; and *Ribes* — deep pink, flowering between March and May, then blue berries from August.

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Mail-order plants work well if you buy with care, says Stephen Anderton

Outdoor type, wants to put down roots

Tall, dark hermaphrodite, no ties, loves running and good food. WLTW warm outdoor type for long-term relationship and maybe more. Distance no object. Good sense of humour essential. This could be the mail-order advert for the dreaded Japanese knotweed. Everyone knows there are uncertainties about mail order. But there are also great advantages, especially if you know what you are looking for. As with tele-dating, anticipation becomes half the pleasure.

Years ago I bought a crate of camellias from Trehanes, the Dorset camellia specialists. The crate was a work of art, for which I paid an extra fiver on an order of perhaps 20 plants. It was, in effect, a wooden tray, in which every plant stood upright, with hazel rods nailed over the lines of pots so they couldn't move. To the four corners of the tray were nailed vertical hazel rods, which were pulled together in the centre to make a tent, and the whole covered in black polythene.

The camellias were in perfect condition. The lesson is, as ever, that you get what you pay for. If things sound extraordinarily cheap, they are usually of cheap quality. The quality of mail-order plants depends on the packing. There should be no room for plants to move around. I particularly mistrust clematis by mail order, because they get so knocked about.

Many nurseries, including the smaller specialists, no longer offer mail order, because it gives them so much grief with paperwork and complaints. A minimum order of £25 is not uncommon. And yet, thank goodness, others continue to offer mail order. It is perfect for tracking down long-desired varieties — if, say, you are on a waiting list for a particular rhododendron from Glendock in Perthshire, and can wait until it is

available. Glendock packs well and makes sure you will be at home when parcels are delivered. Large plants can be sent by carrier and at disproportionate cost. But in principle, when it comes to parcel post, the smaller the plant, the better it can be packed and the better it should survive. Opening parcels full of two-litre pots is not feasible. What is the point in paying postage on all that weight? Nine-centimetre or even 7cm pots are sensible for mail-order plants.

Elm House Nursery of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, supplies tiny rooted plantlets of penulias, geraniums and other patio plants. It uses special cardboard trays over polythene slips and plants arrive in excellent condition ready to pot on. Fibrex nurseries at Evesham specialises in ferns and sends out young plants in 7cm pots which are just the right size to settle in fresh soil.

A 9cm pot is a more acceptable size for taller herbaceous plants. Many catalogues state the size of the plants they send out, but if there is no indication and the price seems high, a call will establish the truth.

Seeds and bulbs are perfect for mail order. The greatest hazard to bulbs is heat and damp (think what would happen to a closed bag of onions after a few weeks), so they should always be unpacked upon arrival, opened up, and placed in a cool place to breathe. In fairness, a few days in the post should be of no matter to most bulbs, and more often than not it is subsequent storage — before planting which lead to mould and rot. Remember that with mail order bulbs you need to state whether, in the case of a variety being unavailable, a substitute is acceptable.

Think twice though about the value of "free gift" bulbs, which are usually cheap and cheerful and not financially



Mail order is good for tracking down obscure varieties

significant. A hundred free *Brodiaea*, Queen Fabiola may be fun once, but once may be enough. (Those mini-gigapanthus heads are lovely, though, at the front of a dry border, with perennial quaking grass *Brisa media*, marjoram, slaty sempervivum and grey-green rosemary.) Tools by mail order are another matter. I like to feel a tool in the hand before I buy it, to feel the size and the balance, and see the quality of the metal. I would only buy a tool by mail order if I knew the brand or had actually seen it.

I hesitate to buy mechanical apparatus by mail order simply because I am particular about quality. Anything with joints can easily be rickety. I trust specialists more, who sell a range of similar products, such as Access garden frames.

• Elm House Nursery, PO Box 25, Wisbech, Cambs PE11 2RR (01945 581511); Fibrex Nurseries, Honeysuckle Lane, Feltham, Middlesex TW9 1JH (0181 738 80225); Trehanes Camellia Nursery, Staplehill Road, Hemsworth, Wiltshire BA21 2TE (01202 873400); Access Garden Products, 17 Yelverton Road, Coker, Northampton NN6 7LS (0188 822301).

Growing in popularity: old English apples are back in favour with gardeners

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gardening

Jane Owen meets the outspoken president of the Royal Horticultural Society

Labour of love assembled with military precision

ME AND MY GARDEN: SIMON HORNBY



Place to relax: Italian marble pillars form a pergola beside the circular swimming pool

Until recently Sir Simon Hornby had 50 varieties of pen-stemon in his garden — almost enough to be a national collection holder — but Sir Simon, who is president of the Royal Horticultural Society, says he would not contemplate holding a national collection.

"If you hold one you have to do it really well," he says. "Most of the national collections are not as good as they should be because most of them are run by keen amateurs who do their best."

"But even the RHS national collections aren't good enough, because they should be really well grown, really well propagated, really well recorded. Most people can't do that."

Sir Simon — Eton, New College, Grenadier Guards and a former chairman of WH Smith — rather assumes that everyone else should be able to achieve and excel in the manner to which he is accustomed. For example, in the six years since he bought The Ham in Oxfordshire, with five acres of garden and 50 more acres beyond, he has transformed the lawn and basic beds into a remarkable planting that ranges from arid to marsh.

His standards, like his bank balance, are different from those of most people. When you have a small garden you have to compromise, but he has battled through, buying 50,000 bricks to build a walled garden of nearly an acre, bringing marble pillars from Italy, planting about 2,000 broadleaf trees and creating four vast mixed beds and a stream garden whose upkeep would cause most conscientious gardeners to tremble.

It helps, of course, to have two full-time gardeners, a greenhouse man for ten hours a week, the services of the designer Martin Lane Fox and an odd-jobber to cut the lawns. Sir Simon says he puts in four days a week (despite "gardeners' back") and his wife, Sheran, who recently escaped from a bedroom fire at their pretty 18th-century house, helps too. "Sheran is very keen and loves helping with the pruning," he says. "She is not a gardener but has learnt the

art from me and now knows lots of flowers."

The back of the house faces south, with views to the hills, and French windows look through ruffles of plumbago onto a terrace scattered in summer with loungers and chairs, and flanked by a mixed border, where the Hornbys take many of their meals. In front of the terrace is a circular swimming pool surrounded by tubs of agapanthus and marble pillars.

Sir Simon shows me pictures of the area from the estate agent's description when he bought The Ham: there was the pool and little else. Today, new walls enclose the area and, to the right, lines have been planted for extra protection from the southwesterly winds that

sweep into this frost pocket. "We had no protection at all. This year a lot of the young acorns, magnolias and other trees were killed off," he says.

Inside the walled garden, flying hedges of hornbeam add a little extra protection. In the resulting shelter, Sir Simon, who spent his first 60 years at nearby Pusey House with a garden designed partly by Jellicoe, has made a geometric crisscross of paths that lead from a magnificent red garden at one end, past lavender walks and rose-encrusted pergolas, and along iris and gypsophila walks to a gravel garden at the far end, where euphorbias, aloes, ornamental grasses and bamboos were planted this year. One of the

squares within the walls is a rose garden, even though Sir Simon says he hates rose gardens. This is different, though: not a hybrid tea in sight and a standard wistaria growing at the centre of each of the four beds. At the front of the house, screening the cars, is a hedge of *Rosa rugosa*.

"Roses are one of my favourite plants," he says. "I hate rose gardens but I love roses. I am a flower man. Colchicums are lovely. And salvia. And peonies. I prefer flower to leaf. I am not a tree person."

He picks out some of his favourite flowers: a yellow kniphofia; a *Rhus chinensis*; *Hosta* 'Royal Standard'; several huge-leaved paulownias; the creamy flowered shrub *rose* 'Jaqueline du Pré' and the red bush rose 'Ingrid'

Bergman'. Many of his favourites have an RHS award of merit.

Sir Simon has a fine gardening pedigree but is modest about his knowledge and skills. "My grandparents and parents were good gardeners, but I did not start gardening properly until I came here. I just picked it up from my family."

"I used to love working in the garden — in the holidays from Eton and when I was an undergraduate. Weeding and pruning, deadheading and so on. I have to look things up all the time, because I do not have a good knowledge of plants or how to do things."

Sir Simon has his own library at The Ham, but RHS members and scholars who want to look things up have to cope with the society's library being divided between Wisley, in Surrey, and London.

The division is a compromise that caused ructions in the RHS after Sir Simon announced his plan to move the whole of the Lindley Library, probably the most important garden library in the world, to Wisley.

It was a controversial idea and one that sparked much sharpening of secateurs in the normally genteel society, culminating in a public contretemps between Sir Simon and Lady Salisbury, one of Britain's most eminent gardeners, at an AGM of the RHS when the president appeared to get shirty with Lady Salisbury.

"I did not get cross with Lady Salisbury. I told her that she was out of order, which she was as a vice-president. When I asked her to sit down, we hadn't done the awards and so we hadn't started the meeting. She behaved extremely badly."

"I still believe the whole library should be at Wisley. The fact is that we won't now have as good a library as we could have. I regret it all because people were so rude and bad-tempered."

The stresses of presidential life melt away at The Ham, although, having poured sweat, backache and dach into the garden here, Sir Simon is already looking forward to starting yet another, smaller garden for his dotage.



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Grand houses in the Home Counties often fetch double the agents' estimates. Rachel Kelly reports



Nancy, Diana and Unity Mitford lived at Asthall

Nice even at twice the price

Are agents failing to do their sums properly? A number of houses in the Home Counties are currently selling for twice their guide prices. On Wednesday, the Mitford family's former home, Asthall Manor, was sold for more than twice its £1.3 million asking price, to the businessman David Davies. Earlier this month, terms were agreed on the sale of the Culham Court estate near Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire, on the market with Knight Frank for £6.5 million. A sale is rumoured to have been agreed at around £10 million, to an unnamed English buyer.

The market seems to have moved faster than the agents' calculators. Rupert Bradstock, from Knight Frank, defends his profession, however. He says: "The market is a strange place at the moment. Agents try to pitch the house at a price which is sensible. Typically, that is within a 10 per cent range."

But there are exceptions. "These are houses that look great in the photo, and the brochure is fantas-

tic. Then they go on the market in a week when the weather is beautiful. Perhaps ten people are interested and this narrows to two who slug it out. It is almost a question of pride." This certainly seems to have been the case at Asthall Manor in Oxfordshire, where two parties fought to the bitter end in a private auction.

Some agents, such as Lane Fox, have traditionally underpriced to encourage interest. Others may get their sums wrong because they are cautious about the cost of work that needs doing. The selling agents Strutt & Parker admitted there was much to be done at Asthall Manor. The brochure said: "The house has changed little since the late 1920s. It is in a complete timewarp, with its own electrical generator, 1920s bathroom and original kitchen with an enormous



Two buyers fought to the bitter end over Asthall Manor, Oxfordshire, the former Mitford home. It was estimated at £1.5m but sold for £3.15m



The Culham Court estate went on the market for £6.5m but sold for around £10m

redundant black-leaded range." Estimates put repairs at £1 million. Rupert Bradstock, from the property buying service Property Vision, says smarter houses in the Home Counties are increasing in price but they are still cheap in comparison with their London counterparts. "The market for houses worth more

than £1.5 million to the west of London has become international. These houses have not yet caught up with prices in London."

"Home Counties prices do not seem ridiculous price when you think that it costs around £3 million to buy a house in Tregunter Road, in South Kensington," Savills be-

lieves that London prices are slowing down, and will rise by 2 per cent next year, but that the mainstream market, including the Home Counties, will move by 15 per cent.

Asthall Manor is a classic Jacobean Coswold manor house near Witney in Oxfordshire. It was sold amid great secrecy at a private auction held by the agents Strutt & Parker for £3.15 million. Culham was equally exceptional. The Grade II* listed house has a garden running down to the Thames and about 600 acres of land. Asthall

was sold by the estate of Anthony Hardcastle, who died in March this year. He was unmarried and left no heirs. The house was sold with only its lodge building; the coach house and stable block were held back from the sale.

Mr Hardcastle, the son of a Scottish wool merchant, had lived

in the manor house since he was four. His family bought it from Lord and Lady Redesdale, the parents of Jessica, Nancy and the other five Mitford children, some of whose names are still visible today above the bedroom doors.

The family had bought the house with its five reception rooms, six bedrooms, four bathrooms and 136 acres as a temporary home while they were building a property in nearby Swinbrook. Nancy Mitford's classic novel *Love in a Cold Climate* was filmed at the manor and in her book *The Pursuit of Love*, she described it as "large, ugly and north-facing".

The new owner, David Davies, is aged 54. He has a son and two daughters and recently negotiated to buy 20 per cent of the estate agents Savills. His firm is a property trading one, and has offices in southeast Asia.

Ultimately, the sale of houses is an art. "There is a large degree of luck," Mr Sweeting says. The owners of Culham and Asthall Manor were lucky, it seems.

SMART MOVERS

● Prince Ernst of Hanover, who was recently divorced from his wife Chantal, has bought her a house in Victoria Road, London W8. The couple, who were married for 16 years and have three children, shared an 11-bedroom house overlooking the former polo grounds of the Haringham Club in Fulham, which the prince hopes will fetch £10 million. In July this year he



Prince Ernst divorced

was photographed with Princess Caroline of Monaco, who is an old friend of his former wife, at the Monte Carlo Beach Club and again on a yachting holiday.

● The football pools heir Robert Sangster and his wife Susan are discreetly selling



Sangster: selling up

their home in Holland Park, west London, for £7.5 million. The Sangsters also have a house in Barbados.

● Nigel Slater, cookery writer of the moment, is house-hunting through agents Holden Matthews in Highbury, north London, after publishing his latest book, *Real Fast Food*. Slater is looking for a large house in a leafy street, presumably with a good-sized kitchen.

RACHEL KELLY



HAMPSHIRE - Burley Price Guide: £600,000

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PASSMORE STREET, SW1.

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Lease to 2078

£725,000

BELGRAVIA OFFICE: 0171 730 9854



WILTSHIRE - Baydon Price Guide: £240,000

A charming listed cottage set high on the Marlborough Downs, with far reaching views. 3 bedrooms, bathroom, 2 reception rooms, garden room and garage.

NEWBURY OFFICE: 01635 523225



The main house, Normans, dates back to the 17th century and was added to in Victorian times. It has eight bedrooms and the grounds boast a tennis court and two swimming pools

In need of tender loving care

Neglect of horses and property has forced the sale of the Gucci stud farm, writes Alex O'Connell

The goings-on within the late Paolo Gucci's timbered Elizabethan estate in West Sussex have been a bizarre cross between *The Godfather* and a twisted television adaptation of Jilly Cooper's *Polo*. Potential buyers may be interested in the plot summary before putting down an offer for the £1.75 million stud.

Eight years ago, the horse-loving, pigeon-fancying Gucci, millionaire grandson of fashion founder Guccio Gucci, bought the farm with his second wife Jenny. Soon after, the pony-tailed designer, by now in his sixties, fell for the "flame-haired" 20-year-old stablegirl, Penny Armstrong. His wife Jenny left to live in America while Penny moved into the house, and became pregnant with the first of their two children.

All this on top of trouble with the family business, including lawsuits between cousins, Paolo's imprisonment for refusing to pay maintenance and his bankruptcy in February 1994. Even after Gucci died in October 1995 there was more to come.

When the receivers were called in, they allowed Miss Armstrong to stay on and manage the farm. But she didn't manage. Two weeks ago Miss Armstrong was convicted on 11 charges of causing unnecessary suffering to the Gucci horses. She was banned from keeping horses for five years and ordered to pay costs and compensation of more than £15,000.

The house and grounds have also been neglected. There is the musty smell of



Both house and horses suffered from neglect: Penny Armstrong (right) was banned from keeping horses. This one, however, had to be destroyed



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

ground ceiling-plaster and cobwebs throughout. Miss Armstrong says that Pool Barn Cottage (a three-bedroom converted barn in the grounds) has been used only once. The Gate House has remained empty for eight years and the Farm House, conveniently positioned by the stables, has been vandalised by squatters who are still squatting in the stable-hand's quarters.

The main house, "Normans", dates back to the 17th century. It is not listed, was added to in Victorian times and underwent extensive refurbishments when Gucci first moved in. It is not as grand as you might expect.

Armstrong told me that "one of the things Paolo and I had in common was interior design". But the house shows no sign of female influence. It reeks of trash Seventies motel rooms and mixes old and new, indiscriminately. In the music room, also the main drawing room, the walls are painted a shade of purple usually only seen on the nails of Christian Death fans. Below the tin-



The indoor dressage arena at the farm. The well-kept stables have 60 boxes and railed paddocks

bers, 14th-century Italian paintings have been crudely framed in stainless steel. The room is large enough for parties, although Penny said they rarely entertained at home.

Gucci's study is blood red, with bright-green alcoves and rows of bookshelves. The lights need fixing — there seem to be problems with the electricity throughout — but otherwise it is a great place to burrow and hide in.

If you look back over your shoulder as you climb the stairs you'll find the Gucci crest embedded in the stained glass window with the motto "Libertas Gucci". Initially Gucci saw the Sussex farm as a place where he could be free from his family. Ironically, he spent his last few years house-

sitting for the receivers. An overbearing four-poster identifies one of the bedrooms as being the "Master".

All eight bedrooms and seven bathrooms are decorated in a similar fashion: textured fabric walls, low beds and mirrored cupboards. All the bathrooms hark back to a time when it was simply not enough to carpet the floor. Even the bath surrounds are lined with mushroom-coloured Wilton.

In the grounds, there are tennis courts and two swimming pools. Even the indoor pool, sunken into the floor of the barn, sits thirsty and useless. Weeds are sprouting up on the courts. The gymnasium is just plain depressing,

comprising three elevated rooms with a few dusty rowing machines and a well-worn punch-bag.

By contrast, the stables are extremely well-kept. There are 60 boxes, post-and-railed paddocks and an inside dressage arena. Those who would rather muck out than muck around in the house should note that the stables and farmhouse are for sale separately, for £300,000.

Those who prefer less high-maintenance forms of transport can rest assured. Jenny Gucci's motto was: "It's better to cry in a Rolls-Royce than be happy on a bicycle", and although there are no bike-racks, there is underground parking for five cars.

Agents: Savills (Guildford) 01483 576551

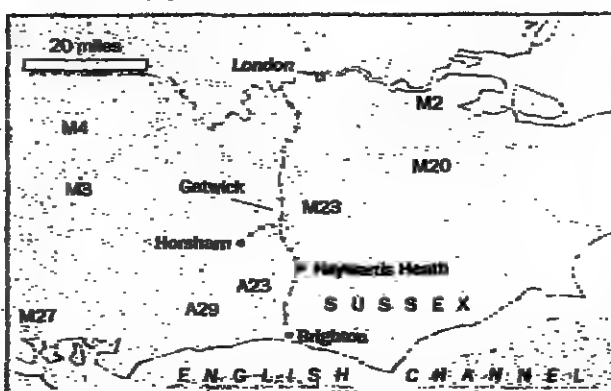
MARKET COMMENT

CITY BONUSES and profitable London business sales have fired the top of the West Sussex market to new heights. "I've never known it so buoyant," says Tommy de Mallet Morgan at Savills' Guildford office. "A few years ago buyers had £2 million to £4 million to spend, but now there are a lot of people with City-generated money."

He says that although prices across the board have risen by around 15 per cent this year (more at the top end), the increases were concentrated in the pre-election period, and demand, though still strong, is now more selective.

This is a highly particular market, and buyers know exactly what they want — a good-looking house with modern conveniences (no time for rewiring), big reception rooms, an indoor pool and accommodation for staff to maintain the house during the owner's frequent absences.

They are also looking for the perfect trade-off between Real Countryside and accessibility.



The county is carved by strong commuting corridors, and buyers have their eye on stops on the fast Brighton-Victoria or Horsham/Haywards Heath line rail links, the A23/M23 which takes them into London via Gatwick (where they can pick up the late-running and regular Gatwick Express into town) and the A29, another good commuting road.

THE TRICK, however, is locating a property undisturbed by the background hum of traffic road and aircraft noise will reflect in the price, according to Alistair Gravenstede at Hampton International's Horsham office.

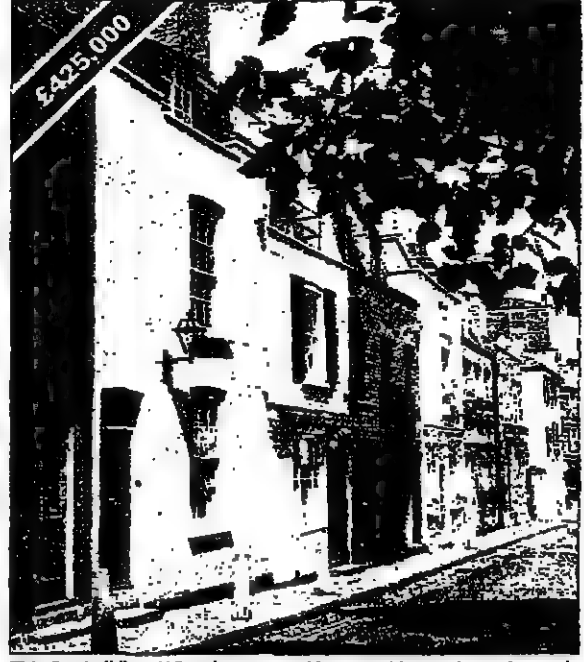
Mr Gravenstede also reports a marked resurrection of the weekend retreat market — again a reflection of City money. Cottages around £300,000 are popular, with access to the main rail links and less important than peace and quiet (though people want no more than 90 minutes' driving from town). A five-bedroom period house in a few acres will cost £500,000-£750,000, and you'll pay £1 million plus for six to ten bedrooms, a tennis court or outdoor pool.

HOMESWAP

GOOD houses in Hampstead and Highgate costing between £750,000 and £1.5m, which buys a four to five-bedroom Victorian semi-detached, will sell within days, despite price rises of 20 per cent this year. The demand is coming from city buyers who spend up to a year on waiting lists. New flats are being snapped up by Hong Kong buyers, priced from £250,000 for two bedrooms, says estate agent Savills.

The new A55 to Bangor has meant that parts of North Wales are now more accessible from the Midlands. Executives looking for family homes within commuting distance of Liverpool and Chester are moving to the Vale of Cheyl, around Denbigh and Ruthin, pushing up country house prices by 10 per cent so far this year. Period houses, with up to six bedrooms and 10 acres, and costing from £290,000 to £390,000, are now in short supply. Further west small country houses can be had from £175,000, according to Strutt & Parker.

Waterside properties in Dartmouth, Salcombe and Kingsbridge are sought after by weekend sailors and retired executives looking for a second home, particularly one with moorings, and £170,000 will buy a two-bedroom flat with a slipway. The few that come on the market fetch a premium of up to 100 per cent. Expect to pay 25-50 per cent more for those homes with a view over water. Estate agents Marchand Petit say cash buyers are queuing to spend up to £1 million on a waterfront home, even though prices have increased by up to 25 per cent this year.



This Grade II listed Victorian terraced house, with a patio garden and roof terrace, in Penton Lane, Hampstead village, north-west London, could be yours for £425,000 (Savills, 0171-431 4841).



£395,000 will buy you the Hell, at Lyng-y-Wern, a seven-bedroom, Grade II listed house in 12.2 acres of park and woodland, close to Holywell and the A55, overlooking the Dee estuary. It comes with a detached five-bedroom cottage, traditional outbuildings and a dovecot (Strutt & Parker, 01244 320747).



In south Devon, £400,000 will buy Millbay Cottage, a three-bedroom, detached house, overlooking Millbay beach and the Salcombe estuary, at East Portmouth. There is also a self-contained, one-bedroom annexe and a double garage (Marchand Petit, 01548 844473).

CHERYL TAYLOR

FASHIONABLE HOMES

OSCAR DE LA RENTA, the fashion designer, divides his time between his country house in Kent, Connecticut (right), and his apartment in New York. De la Renta also owns a seaside house in La Romana in the Dominican Republic, where he comes from.



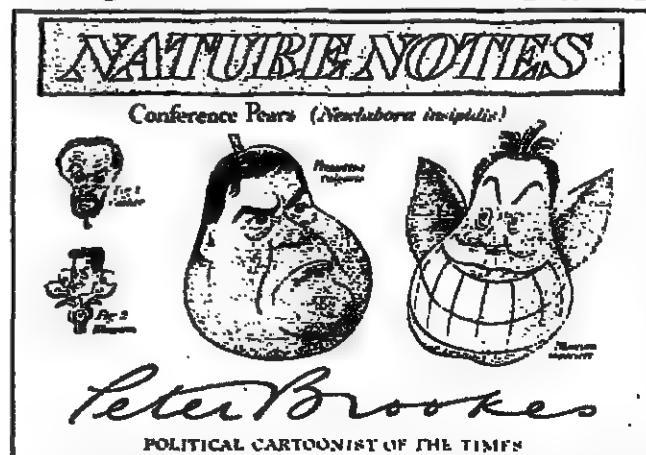
GIORGIO ARMANI, the Italian fashion designer, lives on the second floor of an 18th-century palazzo (right) above his design headquarters in the centre of Milan. He shares the apartment with his Persian cats, and has a swimming pool in the basement and an underground theatre.



HUBERT DE GIVENCHY, president of Christian Dior, lives in a 17th-century manor (left) in Tours, France. The property, in the Loire valley, has a woodland park full of deer and several acres of formal garden.

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In 1996, Political Cartoonist of the Year Peter Brookes launched a series of cartoons in *The Times* on Saturdays called *Nature Notes* — brilliantly executed drawings of both domestic MPs and international leaders as members of a weird and wonderful world. A menagerie in a vegetable patch, the world of *Nature Notes* is a place where the great and the good can do as they please and the furry Boris Yeltsin as a Muscovy (lame) duck; Ian Paisley as an Orange-utan ("Devours all greenery"); and Baroness Thatcher as a rabid old bat (his venom is of European origin, and any bite can prove gravely injurious to grey-haired, bespectacled gentlemen). Anything is possible — John Prescott can even become a Great Tit.

Nature Notes brings together more than 50 of the first *Nature Notes* cartoons to appear in *The Times*. Covering the period from February 1996 to June 1997, just after Labour's historic landslide victory in the General Election, each cartoon takes us to the heart of the news story of the time — among them Tory splits, sleaze and Euro-bickering; Labour's path to power, BSE, Budgets and Britannia, as well as crime and royalty.

Both a revealing commentary on the dog-days of Tory Britain and a hilarious succession of merciless character studies, *Nature Notes* is essential reading for the politically informed.

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Let us make money; then let us pray

In the financial heart of London, beneath the towers of Mamm, Christianity is quietly flexing its muscles. Although many in the City still confuse the Holy Trinity with their chairman, chief executive and finance director, the Gospels are enjoying renewed visibility in daily business life.

A Centre for Marketplace Theology will be fully operational in the new year, providing spiritual guidance to finance professionals. The centre is being launched by financiers who meet at prayer breakfasts. Bankrolled by £500,000 in donations, the multi-denominational centre is described as a "biblical, Christian conscience in and for the City", with a five-year mission to nurture piety, enlightenment. Harassed brokers and traders will be offered specific advice on how to retain their humanity amid the brutality that characterises much of City life.

Malcolm Matson, the centre's millionaire founder, denies that these Mammite Christians will necessarily become sitting ducks for less-principled rivals. On the contrary, he says, the marketplace for shares and bonds would become more orderly and less vulnerable to the sort of "rogue trader" activity that brought down Barings Bank. "Obedience to God is good business," he says.

Mr Matson, who made his fortune



Malcolm Matson: "Obedience to God is good business"

Christians are offering power breakfasts to yuppies in the City of London, says Adam Jones

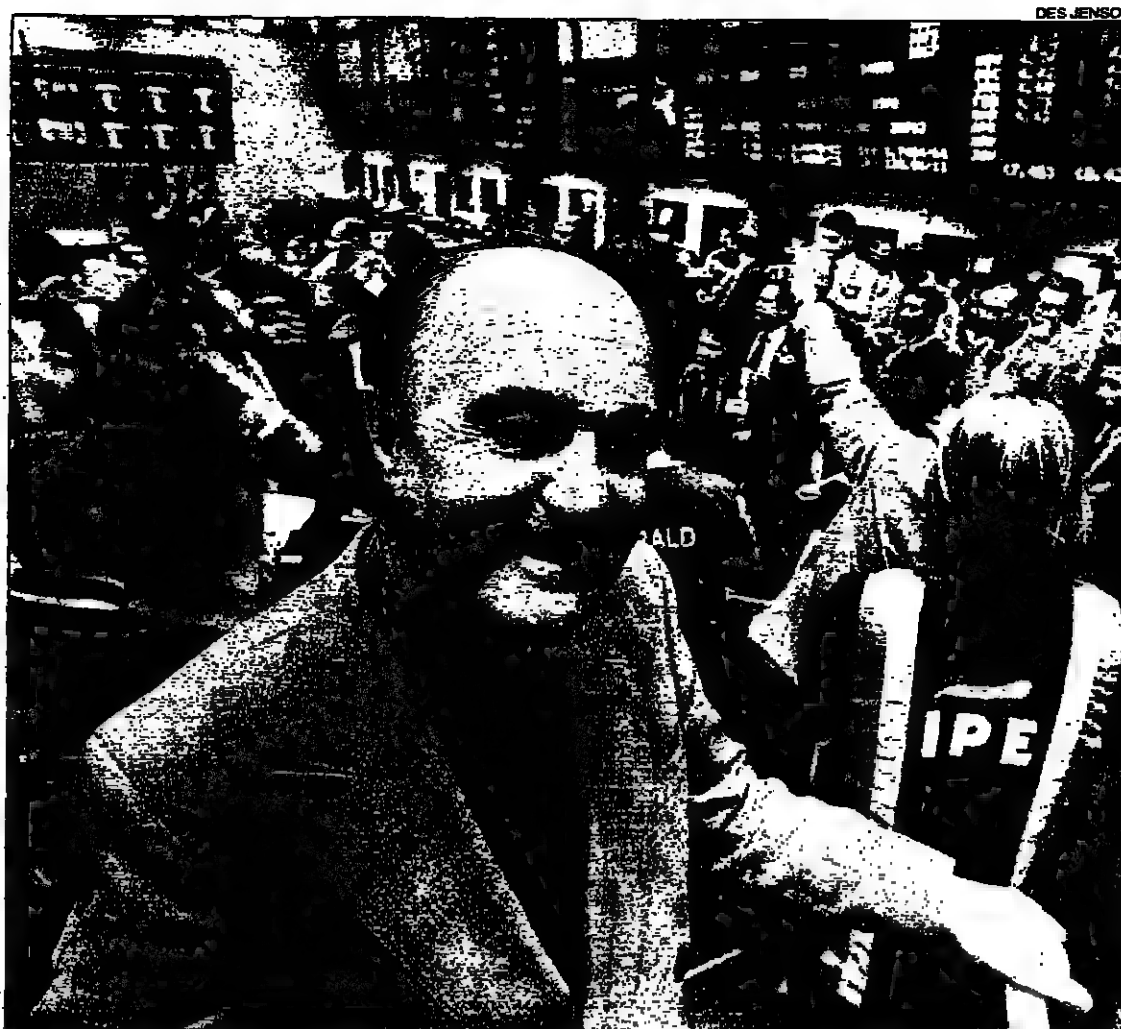
in telecommunications, also runs Trinity Square, a Christian publishing house. He says one motivation for the opening of the centre is the distance among fellow church members for the City and its mega-companies, referred to as "the sin-pits down by the Thames". In Mr Matson's view, the City, where the odd deacon is known to drive a Rolls-Royce, is one of the most glorious embodiments of God's will, so long as the link between wealth production and wealth distribution is maintained.

Mr Matson is no fan of the Corporation of London, the quaint secular authority that runs the City. He was blackballed by the ruling aldermen after being elected to their number in 1995, and has been trying to make the City more democratic.

He is far from alone in his attempts to make the City more godly. The past week was nominated Bridges of Prayer week, a co-ordinated effort by several churches to shake workers from "the pettiness of office politics" to a vision of God's City. There is no shortage of business leaders willing to hear this message. Peter Middleton, head of European operations at Salomon Brothers, is a former monk (Salomon, however, was legendary on Wall Street in the 1980s for its ruthlessness and wealth). Martin Owen, former head of NatWest's investment banking arm, is a member of the Salvation Army.

There is no shortage of Christian churches in which to receive the message, despite the worst intentions of IRA bombers. In the 17th century there were 103 churches within the Square Mile. A few dozen are still standing, including several masterpieces by Sir Christopher Wren.

Some Anglican churches are per-



Canon John Oates, of St Bride's near Fleet Street, is a beacon of stability for local financial companies

manently locked, their stewardship granted as a reward to priests near the end of their working life. Many active churches open only on weekdays. At St Mary at Hill, the Venerable Archdeacon Dr Brian Kirk-Duncan has a sensible relationship with Guinness Mahon, the finance house, and other organisations, such as Billingsgate market. Guinness Mahon, described by David Potter, its chairman, as "the representative of Mamm across the road", hires the church for presentations.

With the presence of financial companies and lawyers on Fleet Street, Canon John Oates, the rector of St Bride's, provides a glimpse of stability to more than just journalists. The church is opposite Goldman Sachs, the US investment bank, and the canon's eldest son, who works for Andersen Consulting, is helping the Stock Exchange prepare its new electronic trading system.

Father Kit Cunningham, who runs St Ethelreda's, one of two Catholic churches serving the City (and the oldest in the UK), has a role that could sometimes be described as

"spiritual management consultant". He recalls being approached by a senior manager concerned at the under-performance of a junior colleague. The manager did not see that the young man was exhausted by too many nights of hard drinking, initiated by the manager himself in an attempt to fill lonely evenings away from his family. "Priests can take a slightly detached view," Father Cunningham says. "We're a safety valve, a reminder of other values."

Popular lunchtime services in the City last 20 to 25 minutes, and are affairs of split-second timing. An attempt at including a sermon into the Mass at St Ethelreda's was met with an early dash for the door from those who could not spare another minute from their strained schedules.

America also tries to integrate religion and business. Magazines such as *Godly Counsel* target Christian business owners, including parables addressing management dilemmas, such as the correct course of action on discovering some of your employees

are going to hell. The US also has an organisation called Executive Ministries, which helps business-minded Christians fulfil "the Great Commission". It cites Matthew 9, where a businessman hosted a dinner party for Jesus to preach to tax collectors and sinners. In the same vein, followers host "outreach dinner parties".

Boundaries between management-speak, self-help books and religion can be blurred. Visitors to one Christian bookshop in the City of London will find *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Christians* prominently displayed. Flash-cards spell out these bad habits in spoof management-guru style. Ineffective Christians "Speak Christianese", "View People as Converts" and "Strive for Imbalance".

It will be interesting to see which Christian tradition will prevail in the City: the serene, church-as-haven or the exuberant style of empowerment favoured by "Celebrate!" at St Margaret's, Lothbury, during Tuesday lunchtimes. The location of the nearest Marks & Spencer sandwich counter could be a decisive factor.

Angels in real life



Ruth Gledhill goes to the Swedish Lutheran Church in London

AT YOUR SERVICE

A five-star guide

DEAN: Lennart Sjöström
ARCHITECTURE: Gothic style with Baroque reredos. ★★★★★

SERMON: On the question of evil and angels. ★★★★★

MUSIC: Traditional Swedish and Welsh hymns. ★★

LITURGY: Lutheran. ★★★★★

FLANKED on either side by offices, the Swedish Church stands like the community it serves, tall, elegant, fair and discreet, in the heart of London's West End. There are about 30,000 Swedes in Britain, and the 19th-century Swedish artist Carl Larsson and his wife Karin are about to be celebrated in an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum later this month. Attending one of the rare English-language services at this Lutheran church felt akin to being in an English parish church before the 1930 *Alternative Service Book*.

Surrounded by immaculately dressed women, and men in the mould of Stefan Edberg and Björn Borg, we were welcomed by the Dean, Lennart Sjöström, who apologised in advance in case he stumbled over the English liturgy. He also prayed for the three children who were to be baptised in the service. "Bless those who bear responsibility for them. Fill them with your love that we may tenderly care for them."

He invited us to confession. "Our God is gracious and comes to us in mercy. When we wander far from Him. He comes to meet us and restores our broken lives. Let us come before Him with confidence and declare our sin." We pleaded with God to "blot out" our transgressions. "Hide Your face from my sins and blot out my guilt."

The Swedish Church has existed in various forms in London for several hundred years. A Swedish-German church was built in 1673 on a site now occupied by

Mansion House Underground station. The church in Harcourt Street was built in 1911, and about several thousand Swedes, many of them students learning English, use it regularly. "Eternal Lord God, who ordained and constituted the service of angels and men in a wonderful order, grant that as Your holy angels always serve You in heaven, so by Your appointment they may help and defend us on earth," the Dean said, going on to preach about the reality of angels on earth. "I am sure there are angels in London," he said. "We might not see or hear them, but I am sure they are here. We all have guardian angels. But sometimes we have a terrible feeling they have gone off-duty. We had to learn they were not at our command, he said. "The success rate in fighting evil should not determine our faith. We must build on something much more secure than that."

● The Swedish Church, 6 Harcourt Street, London W1 2BD (0171-723 5661)



Chaplain Katarina Backelin leads a christening

We are led into a darkened room in the Harcourt hospital, only 500 yards from our home and the church here in Hackney. One minute Rachel is easing her knuckles down for the nurse to apply a blob of blue go. "This might feel a little cold..." Then as the scanner is pressed to her stomach, the screen fills with a tiny twitching body. There is an instant rush of adrenaline from this grainy X-Files moment. The Truth is in There. Now I believe it.

Exclamations of wonder pour from our mouths, hardly tempered by embarrassment in front of the nurse, for whom this miracle happens every five minutes. The baby is measured with a few clicks of the mouse. Everything is OK.

That was at 11 weeks; the second

The world looks different with a baby on the way

time was different but still wonderful. There was even more anticipation as we waited for a private screening of the holy mystery. Afterwards the words of Psalm 139 filled my head: "I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Thank God for nine months to process all this fear and wonder. Time for denial, panic and arguments about names. Kirsty



has been vetoed, but Callum is still in the running. Time also, to absorb the



confession born out of the theological education which is pregnancy.

straight after our thirty-something dual-income decision to try for a family came the stark realisation that this process could not be organised or controlled. All we have is the strange grace of our dumb participation in the creation of life and the thankful discovery that life is a gift.

With seven weeks to go, everything is still OK. We have a deal with God. We do not presume to come to this birth trusting in a perfect result, rude with health and free from any defect. The world looks different now. I catch myself thinking that the Hackney educational hit squad has four years to get it right. Everybody's children suddenly seem more important and more vulnerable.

● The writer is Minister of Clapton Park United Reformed Church in Hackney, East London.

Church services tomorrow

Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

BANGOR CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 Breviary; 11 Ch. Eucharist; 5 Cymru Breviary.

BELFAST CATHEDRAL: 10 HC; 11 Ch. C. Missa Collegium regale (Howells); 3.30 Ch. E. Responses (Leighton).

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 Ch. M. Canon Hindley; 10.30 Eucharist. The Blackburn Service (Jackson); 4 Ch. E.

BRECON CATHEDRAL: 11 M. Ireland; 11.30 Ch. E. Responses (Leighton).

BRISTOL CATHEDRAL: 7.40 M; 8 HC; 10 Ch. Eucharist. Missa brevis (Mathias); 3.30 Ch. E. Sunston in A. Canon P. Johnson.

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 M; 11 S. Eucharist. Messe Cum Jubilo (Durufle); 3.15 E. Rev P. G. Brett; 6.30 Service for Healing and Healing.

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL: 7.45 M; 8 HC; 10.30 S. Eucharist. Darke in E. Canon D. Weston; 3.30 E. 6.30 E. in Bromfield Church.

CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M; 8 HC; 9.30 Eucharist; 11.15 S. Eucharist. O. Quam Gloriosum (Victoria); 6 Ch. E. Wood in E. Canon B. Thompson.

CHESTER CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M; 7.45 E. 8 HC; 10 Ch. Eucharist; 11.30 M. Canon O. Conway; 3.30 E. 6.30 ES. Sunston in B flat.

CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M. Ireland in G; 11.15 Eucharist. The Chancellor; 3.30 E. 6.30 E. in minor.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL: Dublin 11 S. Eucharist. The mass Euge Bone (Tuck); 3.30 E.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL: Oxford: 8 HC; 10 M. Jubilate (Porcell); 11.15 S. Eucharist. Canon O'Donovan; 6 E. Purcell in B.

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: 7.40 M; 8 HC; 10.30 Eucharist. Canon V. Faulstich; 3 Ch. E. Murrill in E.

CROFT CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.45 S. Eucharist. Widor for 2 choirs and organs. Canon B. Weaver; 6 Ch. E. Dyson in F.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M. Boyce in C. Canon M. Kitchen; 11.15 HC. Mass in G (Schubert); 3.30 E.

ELY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 S. Eucharist. Canon J. Inge; 3.45 E. Howells in G.

EXETER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S. Eucharist. Jackson in G; 11.30 Trafalgar Day Service; 3 E. 6.30 ES. Rev G. Dexter.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.15 Eucharist. Darke in E. Canon N. Chisfield; 12.15 HC.

GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S. Eucharist; 11.15 M. 6.30 E. Jackson in G.

HEREFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Eucharist. Rheinberger in E. Rev J. Alms; 11.30 M. Sunston in B flat; 3 Ch. E.

LEICESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M; 10.30 Ch. M. Sunston in B flat; 4 Ch. E. Ireland in C. The Chancellor.

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 S. Eucharist. Beati quorum via (Stanford); Rev G. Statton; 3.30 E. Responses (Leighton).

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL: 7.45 L; 8 HC; 9.30 S. Eucharist. Schubert in G; 11.15 M; 12.30 SM. Jubilate in B flat (Stanford); 11.30 S. Eucharist; 3.30 E. Canon P. Morgan.

LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL: 8 M; 8 HC; 10.30 Judges Service; 3 Ch. E. Rev G. Davies; 4 HC.

LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M & L; 8.9 Eucharist; 11 S. Eucharist. Darke in F; 12.15 Eucharist; 3.30 Ch. E. Harwood in A flat; 6.30 E. Rev Dr J. C. Baldwin.

LONDON CATHEDRAL: 8.45 M; 9 Eucharist; 10.30 S. Eucharist. Missa Brevis (Palestrina); 6.30 E. The Dean.

NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M; 8 HC; 9.30 S. Eucharist. Darke in F; 6 Ch. E. Harwood in A flat.

NEWPORT CATHEDRAL: 10.30 S. Eucharist. Robert Ashfield in C; 6.30 Ch. E. Stadium in E minor.

NORWICH CATHEDRAL: 8, 9.15 HC; 10.30 Eucharist. Mass for our Times (Widby); 3.30 County Harvest Service. Canon R. Hutterer; 6.30 Festival. E. Sunston in G.

PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL: 9.30 M; 10.30 S. 3 Memorial Service for Diana, Princess of Wales; 5.30 E.

PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 Ch. Rev J. Grindell; 11.15 Seafarers Service. Jubilate (Walton); 6.30 E. Gloucester Service (Howells).

RIPON CATHEDRAL: 8, 9.30 Eucharist; 11.30 M. Vaughan Williams in G; 12.30 Eucharist; 5.30 E. Rev P. Driver.

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 M; 10.30 S. Eucharist. Mass for 5 voices (Byrd); The Dean; 3.15 E.

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Eucharist. Four-part mass (Byrd); 11.30 Healing Service; 3 E. Murrill in E. Canon D. Slater.

SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M; 10.30 S. Eucharist. Messe Solennelle (Langlais); 6.30 E. Canon J. Browning.

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 9 Eucharist; 11 Ch. Eucharist. Sunston in G. Rev L. Lunn; 3 Ch. E. Gloucester Service (Howells); The Provost.

SOUTHWELL MINSTER: 7.45 L; 8 HC; 9.30 Ch. M; 3.15 E. Collegium Magdalenae Coniense (Leighton).

TEWKESBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9 M; 10 S. Eucharist. Darke in F; 6 E. Jackson in G. Canon J. Edwards.

WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 Ch. M; 11.30 S. Eucharist. Missa Brevis (Walton); 6.30 E. Canon P. Calvert.

WELLS CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S. Eucharist; 11.30 M. Responses (Leighton); 3 E. Westminster Abbey; 8 HC; 10 M; 11.15 Eucharist. Missa brevis (Walton); Canon D. Hunt; 3 E; 5.45 Organ recital; 6.30 ES.

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: 7, 8, 9, 10.30, 12.30 Mass; 2.45 Organ Recital; 3.30 Solemn Vespers & Benediction. Magnificat octavi toni (Tallis); 5.30, 7 ES.

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 10.30 SM. Jubilate in B flat (Stanford); 11.30 S. Eucharist; 3.30 E. Canon P. Morgan.

YORK MINSTER: 8, 8.45 HC; 10 S. Eucharist; Mass in G minor (Vaughan Williams); 11.30 M & E. Wesley in B.

ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL: Hertfordshire: 8 HC; 9.30 Eucharist. 11 Civil Service; 12.15 HC; 6.30 E. Responses (Piccolo).

ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL, Cwyd: 8 HC; 11 Ch. Eucharist. Jackson in G. Rev D. V. Griffiths; 3.30 Ch. E.

ST EDMUNDSBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 S. Eucharist. Caldara in G (Martha); 11.30 HC; 6.30 ES. Sunston in F. Rev K. J. Smyth; 3.15 Ch. E. Rev D. Bain.

ST FIN BARRE'S CATHEDRAL, Cork: 8 Eucharist; 11.15 S. Eucharist. Rev Dr C. E. J. Fryer; 7 Ch. E. Purcell in E minor.

ST GILES' CATHEDRAL, Edinburgh: 8, 10 HC; 11.30 MS. Or Just (Brace); 6 Choral Society; 8 ES. Rev H. Gordon.

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, Edinburgh: 8 Eucharist; 10 S. Eucharist. Ireland in C. Canon P. Allen; 3.30 Ch. E.

ST MACHARS CATHEDRAL, Old Aberdeen: 11 MS. Rev R. Fraser; 6 ES.

ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, Dublin: 8.30 Eucharist; 11.15 S. Eucharist. Sunston in F. Rev K. J. Smyth; 3.15 Ch. E. Rev D. Bain.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 8.45 M; 11 S. Eucharist. Missa Pange lingua (Joquin); 3.15 E. Sunston in A. R. Rev J. Broadhurst; 5 Organ Recital.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, SW: 10.30 Divine Liturgy, Kievan and traditional polyphony. Met. Anthony. ALL SAINTS, W: 8 LM; 10.20 MP; 11 HM. Missa Brevis (Leighton); Rev J. Davies; 5.15 LM; 6 E & B.

ALL SOULS, W: 8 C; 9.30 Family Service; 12.30 HC; 6.30 ES. Rev P. Blackham.

CHICHESTER OLD CHURCH, SW: 8 HC; 10 Children's Service; 11 M. Mr D. Royce; 12.15 HC; 6 E. Rev Dr P. Elvy.

CROWN COURT CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, WC2: 11.15 MS. His Excellency Mr B. Maslin; 6.30 ES. Rev S. Hood.

FARM STREET, W: 8, 9.30 LM; 11 HM; 12.30, 4.15, 6.15 LM.

HOLY TRINITY BROMPTON, SW: 9 HC. Rev N. Lee; 11 MS; 5.30 Informal Service. Rev S. Downham.

THE ORATORY, SW: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Mass. Missa Sancta Maria (Gombert); 12.30 Mass; 3.30 Vespers & Benediction. Ave verum corpus (Hendrick); 4.30, 7 Mass.

ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH W: 11 Holy Mass, Archbishop Y. Gzirian.

WESLEY'S CHAPEL, EC2: 9.45 HC; 11 MS. Holy Mass.

WESTMINSTER CENTRAL HALL (Methodist): 85th Anniversary 11 HC. Rev P. Sutcliffe; 6.30 ES. Rev D. Crewes.

ST ANNE AND ST AGNES (Lutheran), EC2: 11 Ch. Eucharist; 7 Bach Vespers, Cantata 109 (Bach); Rev P. D. Schmiege.

ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT, EC4: 9 HC; 11 Ch. Eucharist. Missa Surge et Illuminare (Mantchourt); Rev M. Oakley; 6.30 E. Cesar's Service (Anner).

ST BRIDES, EC4: 11 Ch. M & Eucharist. Darke in F; 6.30 Ch. E. Wise in F. Canon J. Oates.

ST CLEMENT DANES: 11 Ch. Eucharist. Missa brevis (Palestrina); Rev D. MacKenzie.

ST ETHELREDA'S, Ely Place: 11 S. Mass. Landate Dominum (Tallis).

ST GEORGES, W: 8.30 HC; 11 S. Eucharist. Nourse in E. The Rector.

ST JAMES'S, Piccadilly: 8.30 HC; 11 S. Eucharist. Rev H. Valentine; 5.45 EP.

ST JOHNS, E15: 11 C. Wesley auf (Bach). Rev D. Gittins; 6.30 EP. Rev D. Richards.

ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, WC2: 8 HC; 9.45 Eucharist; 11.30 Visitors to London; 2.45 Chinese Service; 5 Ch. E; 6.30 ES.

ST MARY ABBOTS CHURCH, W8: 8 HC; 9.30 Eucharist; 11.15 Ch. M. Rev F. Gellie; 12.30 HC; 6.30 E. Mr N. Pain.

ST MARY'S, SW: 9, 10 LM; 11 HM. Missa Quam per (Lassus); Fr S. Young; 6 Solemn E & B; 7 LM.

ST MARY-THY-VIRGIN, Primrose Hill: 8 HC; 10.30 Eucharist. Missa Brevis (Preston); Rev M. Taylor; 6 Taise Service.

ST MARVELEONE, W: 8 HC; 11 Ch. Eucharist. Missa O quam gloriosum (Victoria).

ST PAUL'S, SW: 8, 9 HC; 11 Solemn Eucharist. Mass of the quiet hour (Oldroyd); Rev C. Courauld.

ST PETERS, SW: 8.15 HC; 10 Eucharist; 11 S. Eucharist. Mass for four voices (Byrd); Fr D. B. Tillyer.

ST SIMON ZELOTES, SW: 8 HC; 11 C; 6.30 E.

CHAPEL ROYAL OF ST PETER AD VINCLAM, HM Tower of London: 9.15 HC. Rev P. R. C. Abrams; 11 M. Responses (Ayward); Canon J. G. M. W. Murphy.

CHAPEL ROYAL, St James's Palace: 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP. And I saw a new heaven (Bainton); Canon D. G. Palmer.

CHAPEL ROYAL, Hampton Court Palace: 8.30 HC; 11 M. Ireland in F; 3.30 E.

QUEEN'S CHAPEL OF THE SAVOY, WC2: 11 S. Eucharist. Sunston in C.

THE TEMPLE CHURCH, Fleet Street: 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP. Sunston in C.

GUARDS CHAPEL, Wellington Barracks, SW: 11 M. Jubilate (Walton); 12 HC.

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Farewell to dog breath

If Fido is down in the mouth it may be time for a canine inspection, Carol Price writes

When did you last floss your dog's teeth? You know, take a fine piece of minny floss, slide it between fang and molar and move it backwards and forwards to clear out those stubborn meaty leftovers? It is enough of a chore for humans, but vets are exhorting dog owners to make it as much a part of their pet's daily routine as the morning constitutional and the encounter with a familiar lamp-post.

Most dog owners, it seems, regard pet dental care as absurd. The very idea conjures up images of grinning Afghan hounds with Colgate rings around their incisors.

Ignoring the vets' advice, however, could lead to much agony of tooth decay.

Evelyn Barbour-Hill of the British Veterinary Dental Association says: "There is little you can do for human teeth today that you cannot do for animal ones. It is just a question of demand. Many are worried about the cost or are quite ignorant of what is going

on in their pet's mouth." Owners who are worried about the looks of the pet's teeth, rather than its health or comfort, will find less sympathy from the dog dentist. Mr Barbour-Hill says he will not perform corrective orthodontic

'I bought some toothbrushes that fit on the end of your finger, and some roast beef toothpaste'

work on show dogs for breeders. "Not only do I think it's cheating, but I'm not in the business of providing uniform Hollywood smiles. I will only correct teeth if I genuinely feel they are affecting an animal's health and comfort."

He has, he says, fitted more orthodontic braces to cats:

"Cats seem to adapt to brackets cemented on to their teeth fairly well. With dogs it looks promising if they haven't smashed them out in the first six hours."

Mr Barbour-Hill maintains that you cannot underestimate the detrimental effects of poor dental health on any animal: "Broken or infected teeth are a leading cause of mortality among animals in the wild. If they can't eat properly, they just starve to death."

He sees increasing numbers of cats with gum disease, "due to the mushy-type foods they have long been fed. They don't do enough chewing to lessen a build-up of plaque and tartar."

If pets are off their food and distinctly listless, the cause, he says, "could quite likely be an extremely sensitive untreated broken tooth or a raging dental abscess leaking toxins into the blood."

Actress Wendy Richard, *EastEnders* star and patron of the Cairn Terrier Rescue Association, is one of the few dog owners who is fastidious about cleaning their dog's teeth. "When my dog Shirley had a hysterectomy I asked the dentist to do a complete wash and brush-up," she says. "When I take her back for her inoculations, I will get her mouth checked and teeth cleaned again."

"I bought some toothbrushes that fit on the end of your finger, and some roast beef toothpaste. I also buy her marrow bones to clean her teeth."

The dog dentist can also repair damage, as Nigel and Jill Saunders discovered while walking with their four-year-old border collie, George. "Another walker threw him a stick," recalls Nigel, "and he



Brushing up: cleaning animals' teeth could give them that special ring of confidence

went crashing from 30mph to zero into a boulder. There was a sickly crunching sound and then we realised he'd broken four front teeth."

Mr Saunders promptly took George to his vet, Raj Dougal. Dougal's brother, Monty, a Leeds University dentist, stepped in to restore George's

front incisors "much as he would have repaired the fractured teeth of a child: sealing off the nerves, etching acid into the remaining enamel and then bonding the new material on top". Soon George was back to his old self, his gleaming chompers almost as good as new.

With just 150 members of the British Veterinary Dental Association — and only 12 on their referral list — veterinary dentists are in demand.

Raj Dougal believes that with support from insurance companies more advanced animal dental treatment will become available. "At present,

TIPS FOR TOP DENTAL CARE

PUT a healthy smile on your dog's face by following these teeth-cleaning suggestions



● **BRUSH** your pet's teeth daily, with proper brushes and paste, from veterinary surgeries and pet shops. Do not use human toothpaste: dogs do not like the taste. The best pastes are enzymatic and contain no potentially harmful detergents, baking soda or salt.

● **GIVE** your dog something to gnaw on — either rawhide or nylon chews, bits of rope (such as the Dental Floss exerciser bottom), or meaty bones, which should be a suitable size — dogs often break teeth by biting on bones that are too big or tough for them. Many of the nylon chews, such as Plaque Attacker (below centre), are formulated to become bristly when chewed, cleaning and reducing tartar.

● **TAKE** your pet to the vet for an annual check-up. Get its teeth descaled and polished to remove tartar.



● **GIVE CATS** fresh, raw, gristly meat to chew, as a supplement to their usual soft-food diet. Have their mouths checked regularly for any sign of crooked, overlong or broken teeth that may cause problems, or red and swollen gums that may be painful.

● **SUSPECT** dental problems if your pet refuses food, seems listless, or paws at its face.



policy cover for dental work is very limited," he says.

Meanwhile, Mr Saunders considers himself lucky. Not only did his insurance company pay all but £50 of the £350 it cost for George's caps, but his dog is a local dentistry pioneer.

"What they did for George's

teeth still amazes me," he says. "I'm constantly checking to see that they're still there."

● For a copy of *Dog Owner's Guide to Proper Dental Care*, send an A4 SAE to TTH Publications, PO Box 15, Watlington, PO7 6BQ, by Monday October 27 (500 copies available).

Jack Crossley treads warily among a collection of endangered cats in a Hertfordshire hamlet

There is not a disease-carrying creature anywhere near the Cat Survival Trust in Welwyn. Dogs, rats, foxes, mice and noisy cats — all back off at sight or smell of the biggest collection of endangered wildcats in England.

More than 47 wild creatures are cared for by the Trust at its secluded cattery in a leafy byway between the Hertfordshire villages of Welwyn and Codicote. A similar number of their domestic cousins prowls outside the reach of the caged creatures, keeping inquisitive rodents at bay.

Snow leopards from Nepal, Canadian bobcats, Siberian lynx, Indian desert cats, Caracal lynx from Africa, the fishing cat from Burma, and cats and cubs from South America share the same diet of rabbits and chickens with their domestic relatives, who know a good biller when they find one.

The food is fed to the creatures whole, with guts included. "Important, the guts," says Terry Moore, the 6ft, bearded former medic nicknamed Dr Doolittle, founder and unpaid director of CST. "Cats are not good at digesting vegetables and they get their ration of pre-digested veg from the guts." There's often venison on the menu too — this from unlucky deer that escape from the nearby Knethworth estate and are run over.

The cats owe their existence to this tiny, remarkably successful charity which, at its improbable address in the English countryside, is saving cats around the world from extinction. Dr Moore runs it with his wife

Just wild about wildcats



Terry Moore with his Caracal lynx. He also has Canadian bobcats and snow leopards from Nepal

Judith and a dozen volunteers from their Canadian-style bungalow.

Sadly, he says, there are lots of unwanted wildcats in the UK. Small zoos, theme parks, circuses and even families love to have them when they are small and cuddly. But when the cats get too big to handle, the CST is one of the few places with the dedication and skill to cope.

The 11-acre complex at Welwyn resembles a building site. To meet the demand for space, the Moores keep having to add new pens; they range from 25ft to 70ft in length, giving the animals ample room to exercise and play. The cats have covered shelter,

and while some of them prefer to sleep outside for 18 or 20 hours when it is sunny, those less well adapted to the heat, such as snow leopards, stay indoors, where they have ceramic floors to keep them cool.

An eight-foot heavy-gauge fence is high enough to keep most of the cats secure, but the high-leaping snow leopards need fences 12ft tall. Generally they live in pairs, but there is a big pen housing five bobcats. Dr Moore's passion for wildcats was roused in 1966, when he saw a marmoset on sale in Harrods for £300. Ten years later he found

himself with a bobcat, an ocelot, a Scottish wildcat and an Indian jungle cat in the small back garden of his Stevenage home. But by this time, he had become interested in preserving wildcats in their natural habitat, rather than keeping them as pets.

In 1976, the charity was formed and the Cat Survival Trust was launched at Welwyn. In 1991, the Moores and a small army of volunteers raised £300,000 to buy a 10,000-acre reserve in Argentina. Now they are about to launch an ambitious campaign to raise £5 million to create other such reserves around the world.

Although it sounds an impossible

figure, Dr Moore is optimistic. He says: "We have a Web site wired into more than 27,000 wildlife conservation and environmental organisations around the world, which have 197 million supporters."

"In 1991, we told a few of those groups we wanted to buy a piece of forest in Argentina. Amazingly, 32 of them published details in their magazines and journals, and the money started in. We added some of my own money and got a reserve with five million trees, which is a haven for 40 wildcats."

"We are going to tell all 27,000 organisations on the Internet of our plans to buy more forests — including areas in Thailand for tigers and in Nepal for snow leopards. We reckon we can reach 100,000,000 people — all dedicated to environmental issues, and should raise the £5 million."

They aim to preserve areas where cats can exist in their own habitat, a far cheaper option than having to transport a cat back to its country of origin, which costs about £30,000; to breed it, transport it, teach it to catch its own food, and collar it, so it can be monitored for about six months.

"In comparison, our 40 cats in Argentina cost £7,500 each and we have five million trees, billions of insects, and reptiles, fish and primates for the cats to live off — for free. That is not a bad bargain."

● To become a member of the Cat Survival Trust, call 01438 716873; the farm shop, selling its own "whole carcasses" cat food, is open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat 9am-5pm; Sun 9am-1pm.

A VET WRITES

I have a miniature Schnauzer bitch just a year old and my friend owns a Schnauzer dog two months younger. I would like to mate them next spring but my friend fears his dog may "get a taste for it" and he was wondering about neutering anyhow. Would his dog be traumatised in future by memories of "things past"?

Mr Schnauzer's sexual behaviour will be governed more by his testosterone levels rather than memory of things past. Stud dogs "learn the ropes" and know what's expected of them when a bitch arrives but it takes many repeat performances to acquire this knowledge so I don't believe there would be any lasting effect on your friend's dog.

A successful mating may not happen when two inexperienced owners try to persuade two inexperienced canines to mate at a time and place of your choosing.

Perhaps you should look for a stud dog belonging to an experienced dog-breeder. The dog's show reputation may enhance the value of the pups and make it easier to sell them to caring homes. There's a much better chance of a successful mating if the stud dog and his owner know what it's all about — and less risk of

either of the dogs, or anyone else, being bitten.

I've heard that chocolate can poison dogs. I find this hard to believe because so many dogs are given chocolate drops as treats — and don't come to an untimely end. Is this a canine variety of a food scare story?

As often happens, a grain of truth has grown out of all proportion. Chocolate contains theobromine — used in human medicine for certain heart conditions. Dogs are hyper-sensitive to this drug. Dark, expensive chocolate contains much more theobromine than ordinary slot-machine bars. A couple of ounces of black chocolate at one sitting could upset an average-sized dog, but three chocolate drops or half an inch from a bar will not do any harm. Many chocolate treats for dog consumption are nearly free from theobromine. The manufacturers recognise this minuscule hazard.

I have been concerned with one death from chocolate poisoning. A small spaniel, 11lb in weight, was left overnight with an opened, 2lb, box of chocolates. He ate the lot and died, which is a pre-Christmas warning: look up your chocolates.

JAMES ALLCOCK

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I panicked, put on the little light you do your lipstick by, and edged forward, slowly and uncertainly, into the dark...

Me? I'm having a smashing time

LIFE AND SOUL



JANE SHILLING

I suppose it is the sort of experience everyone has to have at least once in their lifetime — like smoking a cigarette, or jumping out of an aeroplane. It was a couple of weeks ago, and I had been invited to a party — the birthday party, as it happens, of the literary editor of *The Times*. I was terribly excited about this. I don't — what with work and motherhood and trying to keep the draining board free of deadly salmonella and the cupboard stocked with Thomas the Tank Engine pasta — Get Out Much. So I had obtained a special exeat from Linda — back by 11pm and not a second later — and put on my thrilling new velvet jacket with Charles Rennie Mackintosh roses printed all over it in an artistic shade of ginger. I had spent the whole day worrying about what I should say to the beautiful and intelligent literary figures whom I should doubtless be meeting at this bash (I must try and remember not to tell them to sit still and get their elbows off the table). And at last the working day had ended and there I was in my car, approaching a roundabout which might or might not have a turning off it that led to Islington.

Now, the issue of North London is a vexed one for me. I may have been born in Kent, but after nearly a decade of living in SE this and that, I am a South London girl through and through, and firmly of the opinion that anywhere north of the Fulham Road is simply seething with dragons. Islington and Hampstead and other such dauntingly fashionable postcodes I cannot do at all. Even if I should (highly unlikely) ever succeed in navigating my way there, I am perfectly certain that I would never find anywhere to park, and so, after driving around and around in increasingly hysterical circles, would eventually have to turn back and head for the security of the dear old Blackwall Tunnel and home. However, for the sake of Erica's party, I was determined to be brave. I had looked up the route in the A-Z and attempted, several times, to memorise it. But suddenly, here I was approaching this enormous roundabout, with all sorts of alarming signs dotted about it, saying

"Tilbury", "Newmarket", "Cambridge", "The North" and other places I would prefer not to end up in. I panicked, put on the little light you do your lipstick by, grabbed the map and propped it up on the steering wheel as I edged forward, slowly and uncertainly, into the dark, amorphous, unlit unknown.

Crash tinkle tinkle. Oh blimey. Oh hell. The dark, amorphous unknown turned out to be the back of a great big black taxi cab from which, hopping like Rumpelstiltskin with righteous rage, there emerged a very small taxi driver. Your fault, he said. Your fault, your fault, your fault. Your insurance company

won't pay up, you know. You silly cow. Oh, um, crickey, I said. Oh dear. Well, if they don't, I rather think that is my problem, don't you? And don't call me a silly cow. Honour thus satisfied on both sides, we concluded a relatively civil exchange of all sorts of numbers, and returned to our respective vehicles. His with a microscopic dent in the back bumper, me with a busted headlight and a nasty wound in the wing just above it.

By now, I had lost my nerve entirely. For a start, I had already, that week, had one thoroughly horrible experience while wearing my nice new velvet jacket. This, I thought, trembling with the shock of it

all, is clearly the Jacket of Doom. Now I shall never be able to wear it again and, if I do, Nemesis will strike me down. More urgently, there was the matter of Erica's party. I was hopelessly lost, adrift between Tilbury and The North, with Islington nowhere to be seen, and only one headlight.

The moral of this incident, it seemed to me in my overwrought state, was that single mothers are not meant to go to parties — otherwise they would have husbands to drive them there. Reasoning thus, I swung the steering wheel in the direction of the friendly Thames and, snivelling a bit, limped home — where Linda and her young man were just getting stuck into *The Return of the Jedi*, and were far from pleased to see me.

posed metal, and its thick coating of London grime and the sugary spit from the lime trees that line our street. Inside was no better — a deep litter of old *Vogues*, sand, seaweed, multi-coloured feathers and interesting shells from our holiday, some three months ago. And we were due that very day for lunch at Grandma and Grandpa's house.

Now, running into the back of a taxi while getting lost on your way to some wild Bohemian party full of unsuitable men with, doubtless, advanced views on morality, is exactly the kind of flakey behaviour that my parents spent my whole adolescence going on and on and on about. I was definitely not looking forward to this lunch. Comment, I could just see, would be made.

I slunk through the lanes around my parents' house with my head down, and skulked into their drive, hoping to park with my front end in a bush, so as to conceal the wreckage as much as possible. In vain. "Silly mummy crashed her car," said Alexander. There was a long silence as my father examined the damage. "Well," he said eventually, with a restraint that now seems quite heroic, "at least no one will want to steal it."

Modern paters at home with familias

At the start of Father's Week Arabella Warner meets men determined to make a good job of it

Richard Olivier is doing his best not to repeat the sins of his fathers, especially the famous ones. When he was a child he was more likely to encounter his father, Sir Laurence, on stage and screen than at home.

"Dad was the big fellow reading the newspapers in the other room, or he was Orsello being written about in the newspapers," he says. "I felt insecure about my identity because my father was so public." As a result, when he became a father, Richard made a conscious effort to be more available to his children emotionally and more physical in his contact.

"I have a wrestling relationship with my children that I never had with my own father," he says. "I try to talk to them about what is going on in my life. I talk to them about going away and missing them. If a child isn't told, they assume you are going away because you don't like them. The more reassurance you can give them, the healthier your relationship with your children will be."

Most men have to learn how to be a father, and it is even more difficult when you are young. Ken Follett, the bestselling thriller writer, did not have the best start to his career as a parent. He was 18 and still at university when his girlfriend became pregnant.

"It seemed like a disaster," he says. "We didn't want to have a baby but we had a son and we loved him. I learnt to change nappies and make bottles. When the boy was 11, however, Follett packed him off to boarding school.

"I lost him," he says. "It might have been OK if I'd given him the extra attention when he came home, but I was too wrapped up in my career."

Years later they have managed to mend the breach, but Follett is mournful about those lost years. He learnt too late what the job meant.

"Fathers must remember that the relationship you have with your children is the



Laurence Olivier: a distant figure to his son Richard

closest bond you can have," he says. "You can divorce your wife, but never your children."

Follett believes too many fathers learn how to be a parent by making mistakes — mistakes which it is almost impossible to rectify.

John Griffiths, who at 63 calls himself "the oldest single father in Britain", would agree. Luckily for him, however, he had a second chance. Brought up by a governess in India and then sent to boarding school in England, he had a distant relationship with his father.

He says: "My father had set me goals of ambition which meant that the likelihood of me spending time with my children was remote. It never occurred to me to be less ambitious in the things that I wanted, simply to spend more time at home."

The result of his workaholic lifestyle was a failed marriage and a dysfunctional relationship with his children. When his second marriage also crumbled in the face of a busy career, he was left with the sole responsibility for Emily, his five-year-old daughter. This gave him the opportunity to learn from the past.

"I suddenly became more

connected with the day-to-day things," he says. "Trivial things that men don't realise they are at work and yet which are very exciting — little things you observe and enjoy."

Not all fathers find it so difficult to make the choice between their family and professional lives. Dermot Murnaghan, the ITN journalist, gave up the biggest political story in 50 years, covering election night in May, to be present at the birth of Molly, his second daughter.

"My wife had been admitted to hospital the day before," he says. "By 9pm I had to tell my boss that I wasn't going to make it. Molly was born the very moment that the first election results came in."

He does not regret for a moment missing being at work. "I'm proud to say that my family means more to me than my career. There will never be a moment as precious as my daughter's birth."

How things change. John Griffiths reckons that in the 1950s any attempt by a father to share the processes of nurturing and upbringing was not merely frowned upon by other men, it was also firmly resisted by women.

"That's not true any more," says Olivier, who runs courses



Dermot Murnaghan with his elder daughter, Kitty. "I'm proud to say that my family means more to me than my career"

in parenting for modern fathers. "A lot of men want to be, and often are, more involved as parents. Which doesn't necessarily make being a father any simpler. When I'm at work I feel bad because I'm not with the kids, and when I'm with them I'm not doing enough work. Two, millennia of identity are being

redefined here — we've got to get over the idea that men can only be expressive when they are in the pub or at a football match. It's a huge cultural shift to realise that dads have a real role in bringing up kids."

● To take part in any conferences organised by Richard Olivier contact Wild Dance Events (0171-813-4260).

Adrienne Burgess on why men spend just six minutes a day with their children

Fathers can be parents, too

"My mother did everything she could. She was a great mum and I loved her," says father-of-two Steve Boyd, who hardly knew his own dad. "But I don't think you can replace a father. I mean in terms of guidance, in terms of care, in terms of help, in terms of love."

A recent survey found that 86 per cent of Britons believe that fathers should be more closely involved with their children. But research shows that, in practice, many stressed-out working fathers struggle to find six minutes a day to talk and play, one-to-one, with their children.

Steve Biddulph, a distinguished Australian family therapist, warns that with British men now working the longest hours in Europe, we are "in danger of producing the most under-fathered generation on Earth — damaging for our girls and crippling for our boys."

Society does nothing to support the notion of dad as true co-parent. "Family-friendly" employment is designed for women and UK fathers have no right to paternity leave. After divorce, the courts pay lip service to the importance of fathers but seldom agree to children spending near-equal time with both parents. The Child



Steve Boyd treasures the closeness he shares with his sons Gary, left, and Stephen

Support Agency is interested only in fathers' pay packets and refers to men who do not live with their offspring as "absent parents", even though 47 per cent see their children at least once a week.

Nor does the way fathers are portrayed in newspapers or on TV support change. In commercials, the few fathers appearing with infants are usually shown to be incompetent, because as one advertiser explained: "The advertising is directed at mothers, and research shows they like to see

fathers fail." When feature-film dads become highly involved, it is only through abnormal circumstances, as in *Jack and Sarah* or *Kramer vs Kramer*.

And though Kramer won his son, he lost his job. As for Mrs Doubtfire, Robin Williams' failure as a breadwinner was his initial undoing, and throughout the film the masculinity fears expressed in the title are rampant.

However, the average father does seem to be getting more involved. Four out of

five dads live with their children in two-parent families. The Labour Force Survey reveals a staggering increase in role reversal: the number of househusbands has more than doubled from 44,000 in 1992 to 98,000 in 1996.

Underlying trends point towards continuing change — something historians understand from tracking the way women's roles have altered in the past 100 years. When family size first dropped sharply and increasing life

expectancy forced women to examine what they were going to do with the rest of their lives.

Now men, too, are reassessing their roles. Divorce is more common, so they cannot rely on marriage to ensure continuing closeness to their children. With mothers working and job uncertainty rife, the days when they could rely on a job are gone. No longer being trained for war, they are cultivating gentler qualities.

With strictures against men's presence at the births of their children lifted, the vast majority of fathers now share what used to be an exclusively female miracle. This sets many on the road to parenthood with a freedom to express what their fathers so often could not admit publicly — that it's great to be a dad.

"When Stephen, my eldest, was born," remembers Steve Boyd, "the first time I held him in my arms I felt this is the happiest day of my life. And I tell him that and he reminds me of it. He'll come up and say, 'Was I the happiest day of your life, dad?' And I say, 'Yes you were.'"

● Adrienne Burgess is the author of *Fatherhood Reclaimed: The Making of the Modern Father* (Vernilion, £9.99). *Carlton Television's Father's Week* runs from Monday to October 24.

EXCLUSIVE OFFER THE TIMES

Objects of Desire

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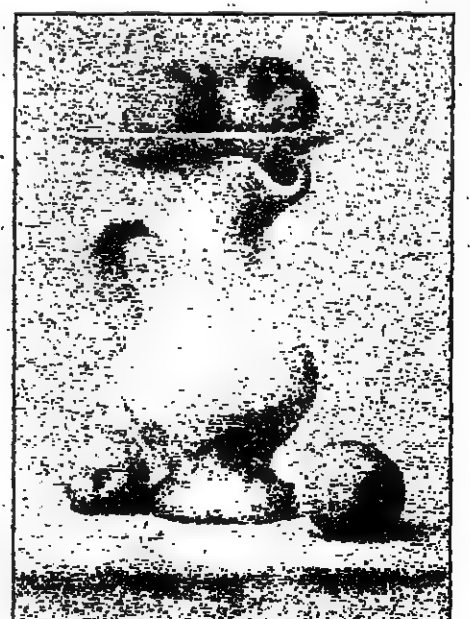
An exclusive reader evening

Readers of *The Times* are invited to an exclusive private view of the first comprehensive exhibition to celebrate and explore 20th-century still life.

The evening, on November 6, 1997, from 6.30-8.30pm, includes a guided tour of the exhibition and an informal reception with wine in the Hayward Gallery on the South Bank, London.

The exhibition, created by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, brings together more than 160 modern masterpieces from collections worldwide. Highlights include: Marcel Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel*; Man Ray's spool-covered iron *Gift*; Matisse's *Goldfish and Palette*; Meret Oppenheim's fur-covered teacup and saucer. *Object*; a white *Lobster Telephone* by Salvador Dalí; René Magritte's *The Interpretation of Dreams*; Jasper Johns' *Flag*; and Brillo Boxes by Andy Warhol.

From Cézanne to Koons, the exhibition explores the ways in which exceptional artists and works have transformed the vision and meaning of the still life in the modern age.



Tickets: £12 (includes entrance to the exhibition, guided tour and drinks). Call the Hayward Gallery box office on 0171-960 4242. (Tickets must be purchased in advance. There is a £1 charge for telephone bookings to cover handling and postage). *Objects of Desire: the Modern Still Life* is organised under the auspices of The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

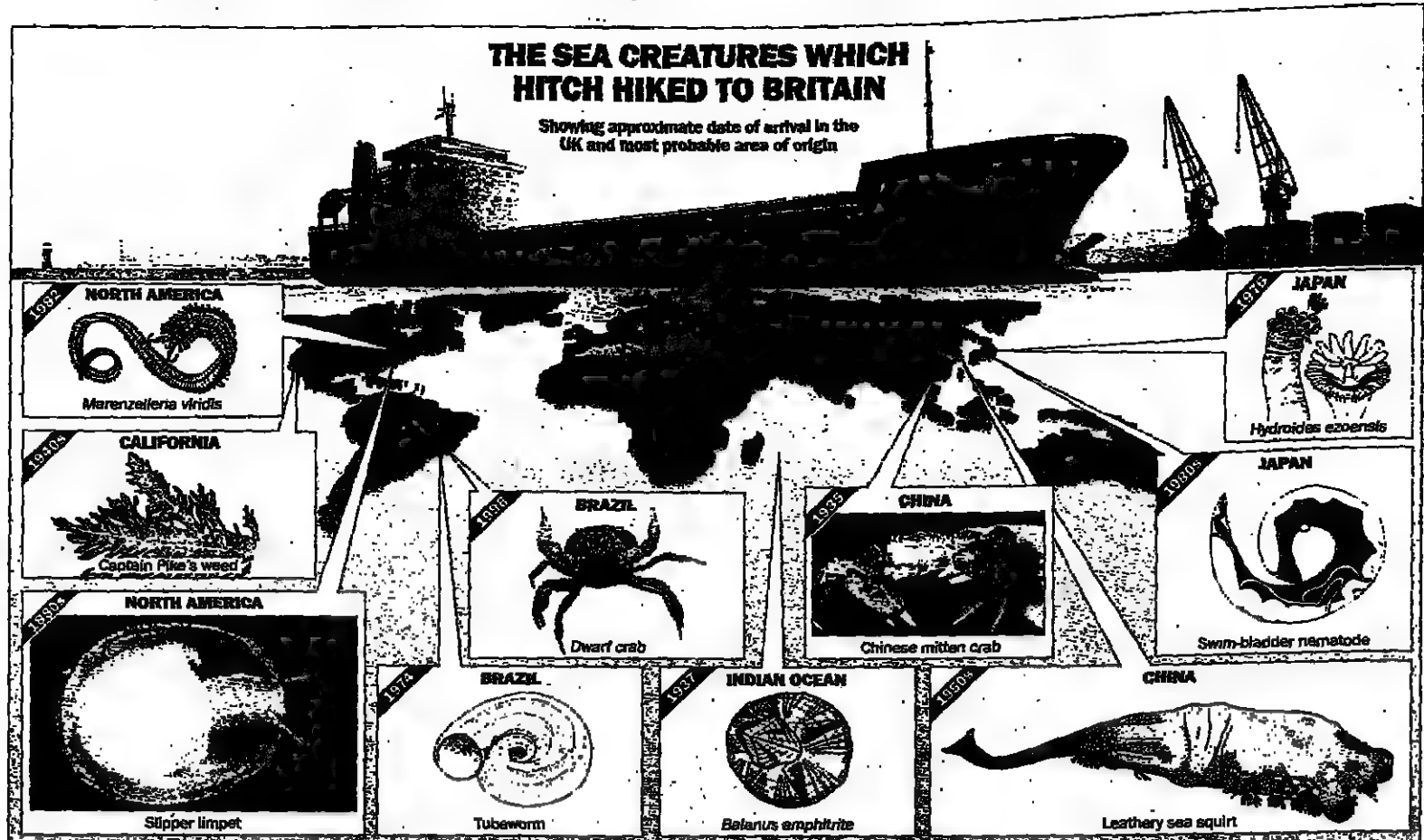
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CHANGING TIMES

Migrant forms of marine life are endangering native flora and fauna on our coasts. Nick Nuttall reports



Chris Mettam first encountered the alien 12 months ago. During investigations at South Docks in Cardiff, he stumbled across the six-legged monster and its armour-plated body. Dr Mettam, a biologist at the University of Cardiff, admits he was surprised. "It was not something I expected to find. They are not pretty and have quite solid little bodies with white claw tips," he says.

The creature, thousands of which have now been found in the dock, has been identified as the dwarf crab, *Rhithropanopeus harrisi*. It is being closely monitored by scientists to see if it will spread to other parts of Britain.

While most people believe that aliens come in spaceships from other galaxies, this one came in an ocean-going ship from northeast Brazil or New Brunswick, Canada, possibly via a Dutch harbour.

Science fiction aliens generally rape and pillage the Earth, using laser guns and other high-tech toys. This alien, along with a growing number of other marine creepy-crawlies and exotic plants and animals, can wreak havoc as well. Like many other species hitherto unknown here, it is one of an army of the new pests that prey on native crabs or crustaceans, or simply oust native beings from their habitats.

An increasing number of these beasts are fouling and damaging fishermen's nets. At least one species, a tube worm

from Japan, is costing mariners a small fortune by sticking to boats and harbour installations in places such as Southampton Water.

The rising number of alien marine life forms has been documented for the first time by researchers with the Government's Joint Nature Conservation Committee, led by Clare Eno, who has found more than 50 alien life forms thriving in British waters, including crabs, grasses, worms and toxic algae, of which about 30 have been brought by shipping.

The aliens have arrived either attached to ships' bottoms or in ballast water, which is dumped in our harbours.

Most have arrived since the 1970s after the increase in the number of supertankers and bulk carriers. The rest have sneaked in through the restaurant and catering business — as part of the trade in oysters, clams and other crustaceans for fish farming.

Dr Eno says that the plants to develop super-quarries in the remote Highlands, from which stone and minerals will be shipped around the world, had increased concern. The ships will dump their ballast water in the unpolluted waters of the Highlands when they take on cargo. "These are



Above left: John Prescott inspects a Chinese mitten crab, which he famously likened to Peter Mandelson, Minister Without Portfolio.

Above right: The marine invaders — and where they come from.

Left: Chris Mettam, with the six-legged, armour-plated dwarf crab from South America that he discovered at Cardiff Docks.

pristine habitats," she says. Sian Pullen, of the World Wide Fund for Nature, says there is evidence that environmental damage caused by aliens was often "cumulative and irreversible". Paul Clark, of the Natural History Museum, claims that once an alien species gets hold of a new habitat, it can be impossible to eradicate. This is because the

normal checks and balances of its native environment do not exist, Dr Clark says. Britain's invaders include the Chinese mitten crab, a native of eastern Asia; a coastal cord grass from America, which has become prolific after crossing with a native grass and is expensive to control; and a giant, volcano-shaped barnacle from the

tropics that fouls ships and strips paint off super-tankers. Others include species of phytoplankton, tiny marine organisms that can form toxic blooms around the coast, suffocating fish and poisoning shellfish. They have been traced to the Indian and Pacific oceans and the China Seas. The leathery sea squirt, *Styela clava*, has spread rap-

idly to places such as Milford Haven in west Wales and across to Ireland since arriving in Plymouth waters in 1952. It was transported here on the hulls of warships after the Korean war. It fouls ships' hulls and suffocates native oyster beds. Jenkin's spire shell, a mollusc, was brought in drinking water barrels from Australia.

into the Thames estuary in the late 19th century and has spread across rivers and canals, where it can devour native watercress.

Elminius modestus, a crustacean from Australasia, was brought here possibly in ballast water and on the hulls of ships or flying boats. It was first detected in Chichester harbour, West Sussex, in 1945. The species has spread, and its larval stage is thought to bear native organisms in competition for space on river beds.

A link between outbreaks of cholera and the movement of ships has increased concern about these tiny marine organisms infesting ballast. Botulism, which can make shellfish a health risk, has also recently been detected in ballast water.

Dr Eno believes that another alien organism, *Coscinodiscus wailesii*, can suddenly explode in numbers producing a "heavy, grey, stime" that clogs and breaks trawlermen's fishing gear.

The problem has become so serious that the Government has ordered studies into the ballast-water threat. Scientists at Conwy and Aberdeen have found that more than 42 million tonnes of ballast from other countries are being dumped in British ports.

Guidelines issued by the

International Maritime Organisation (IMO), strictly enforced by countries such as Australia, require ships not to take on ballast in shallow waters or where toxic algae blooms are evident. Ships should also exchange ballast water at sea, rather than in ports. Sediments, which can contain alien worms and the cysts or resting stages of tiny marine organisms, should only be discharged into approved areas of a port.

But the Conwy survey found that, of 111 ports, 79 per cent have no policy or regulations covering the dumping of ballast water. Only five request compliance with the guidelines. Only three had any idea that ballast water poses an environmental risk.

At the Scottish Office's marine laboratory in Aberdeen, Elspeth Macdonald has been studying organisms in ballast water. "We are finding phytoplankton and diatoms, but also some very strange things," she says. The research is part of a global bid to work out how international shipping and the movement of marine life forms from one part of the world to another are endangering native flora and fauna along coastlines contaminated by the unwanted visitors.

Some countries, including Britain, are seeking new guidelines through the IMO. Researchers are also looking at ways of treating ballast water, including using the excess heat from a ship's engines to sterilise the water.

Shoots bring new breed of gamekeeper

An old rural craft is making a stealthy comeback

The traditional image of the gamekeeper — as a ruddy-faced fellow dressed in tweeds that only Chris Eubank would dream of wearing — is undergoing a quiet revolution. The profession, which employed 27,000 people in the early part of the century, now numbers just 5,000, according to the British Association for Shooting and Conservation. But the decline, made worse by poor wages (£9,000 a year is the average), anti-social hours and increasing resistance to the rearing of birds, trapping and shooting in general — the three mainstays of the keeper's job — looks like being reversed by the new breed of gamekeepers taking to the hills.

The young Turks now entering the job could be as far removed in background from the traditional keeper as Eubank, and are unlikely to have had the job handed down to them by their fathers, but they are no less dedicated to the countryside, and to shooting in particular.

Now, however, reflecting the upsurge in interest, there is a training course for them to get to know what's what. Organised by the Game Conservancy Trust and Spratt's Game Foods, the part-time keeper's course costs £210 for three days, and is based at Fordingbridge in Hampshire.

The head tutor, Mike Swan, a trained botanist, has seen the changing face of the trade first-hand. "For every full-time keeper now, there are two or three employed part-time — and two or three keen amateurs," he says.

The aims of the course are to "give people a good thorough knowledge of keeping through conservation, and through wise use — the Game Conservancy Trust's motto.

Most people's image of the traditional gamekeeper falls somewhere between Sean Bean smouldering among his pheasant poults in the television version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and George Barford moaning on *The Archers*

("Jack Woolley knows nothing about birds, Christine"), so it came as a something of a surprise to run into Gill on the course: one of three women out of 17 students. (Most preferred to be known just by their first name, such can be the social stigma of the trade in some areas.)

One of a growing number of people who are spending time and money on a different kind of shoot from the traditional model — smaller, DIY-style affairs, often with a few friends — Gill quit her job as a facilities manager after "30 years behind a desk" to help run a small shoot. "It was the best thing I ever did," she says. In her case, an enthusiasm for outdoor life led into part-time keeping.

During the course, students cover all the practical elements that a keeper must become expert on — from the correct way to incubate eggs, to how to build a rearing pen that will keep pheasant in and foxes, stoats and rats out. "Keeping is in the detail," Mr Swan says, and some strange details emerge.

Sam Seall, with a lifetime's experience of keeping, explains to a slightly bemused group of students how to get a gundog accustomed to the sound of gunfire — by sitting down with him and watching through a few old westerns on the television. Daddy-longlegs get a special mention: they can be one of the keeper's main headaches, because pheasants will wander from their pen in order to gorge on them.

"Keeping involves a bit of everything," we were told. "Conservation, agriculture, horticulture... everyone wants instant results. Part of my job is explaining to people it doesn't work like that."

The emphasis of the course is firmly on the practical — from how



Mike Swan, the head tutor at the Fordingbridge gamekeeping course, shows how to trap a mink.

to build a ducking creep (which allows the ducklings to travel through the pen for food, but not to the mother), through when and how to broadcast maize and millet, to providing cover for the birds and spotting signs of badger activity.

Nearly all the 17 members on the course were setting up new shoots, or reviving old ones which had run down. Shooting is getting more affordable, too. "In real terms, it has never been cheaper," Mr Swan says.

For Peter, who has a gardening

business in Sussex, this is crucial: "We're 14 mates who got together to form a shoot. We each pay £250 into it every year, and everyone takes it in turns to shoot and help out. It's nothing special: we're just ordinary, working people."

On the part-time gamekeeping course at Fordingbridge you can expect to run into just about anyone — everyone from builders to businessmen were there, and ages ranged from 20-year-old Craig from Ayrshire, to white-haired Chris, a sprightly character in his "late sixties". The only age limit is a

minimum of 18 years, because the students are accommodated in pubs over the three days.

Andrew, who is the boss of a specialist building company in Dorset, summed up the optimism of all the course members: "Rearing has opened shooting up to people like me. Twenty years ago it was a closed shop. You couldn't get near a shoot unless you happened to know the keeper, but that's all changed."

Mr Swan says: "These days more and more people from cities are getting interested in the profession. But it doesn't matter where you are from: what's important is a love of keeping."

And just as with the traditional keeper, for the new wave of enthusiasts it's a labour of love. "I'm up till three or four some nights, and then on to work," says Peter. "Keeping is a full-time job for part-time money. But I couldn't live without it, either."

With the knowledge, passion and enthusiasm evident on the part-time gamekeepers' course, we might even see the flamboyant pugilist Eubank putting his matching tweeds to good use. But don't hold your breath.

DEIRDRE SHIELDS

Game Conservancy Ltd, Fordingbridge, Hampshire SP6 1EF (01425 65238).



Image-setter: Sean Bean as Mellors in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*



Setting traps for specific marauders is part of the gamekeeper's art.

For years I laboured in vain to produce enormous, white-skinned spuds. Then I uncovered the secret...

Relax and watch the potatoes grow

DOWN TO EARTH



PAUL HEINEY

I get far more pleasure these days from the small amount of farming I do, because I take it less seriously. I can remember a time when every decision was preceded by a sleepless night, the planting of a crop became a personal battle of wills between me and nature, every movement of cows, sheep or pigs was a struggle for supremacy. The slightest hint of defeat in any of these activities would send me into the severest gloom for days. Now, I care far less and, surprisingly, I am getting results.

Let's take potatoes, which I have grown this year for the first time since "giving up" farming. At this point, it is perhaps worth making it clear that, although I had, and still have, every intention of giving up farming for good, there has been no satisfactory indication that agriculture has decided to release me. So, although we no longer have sheep, I cannot pass a flock without scanning it to see if one might be bleated, on its back and unable to rise, or perhaps kneeling on its front legs to graze giving the impression of being at prayer when all it might need is its front feet treating

for rot. Nor can I pass a field of cows without glancing at their shape, the state of their calves, the glossiness of their coats. It is a habit, one that is difficult to rid yourself of. And it was as much habit as anything else which prompted me to plant potatoes in the spring.

Every spring for eight years — not long, I agree, but sufficient for it to become a fixture in the year — I used to extract the potato ridger from a dark corner of the shed where it had taken its rest since the previous summer. I would vow that this was the year I was going to give it a coat of paint, fail to do so, and then go to the field with a pair of cart-horses to attempt the futile task of drawing ruler-straight furrows in which to plant the spuds. If they had the slightest ink I thought it was the end of the world; if the finished ridges under which the potatoes were planted did not have the appearance of motorway lanes I thought life had lost its meaning. No longer. Let me tell you how we did it this year, and how we are now reaping the fruits of my new-found mellowness.

I always used to buy seed potatoes, specially grown, graded and tested, and costing a small fortune. Somehow, I always thought this was the safest thing to do. Although I never heard such a saying, I am sure there is an old farming adage along the lines of "spare the seed and spoil the harvest" and I thought seed potatoes were one of those things where economy

led to disaster. It was the cost of seed, incidentally, together with our antique, horse-drawn methods of cultivation and desire to apply no manufactured chemicals, that ensured I never made money out of spuds even though I went to the extraordinary lengths of inviting people to come and pick their own while charging well above the over-the-counter price. Most of them enjoyed it. But I still lost money.

Now I take a more selfish approach. I grow four long rows along the edge of a field for my own consumption, or to give to friends. I no longer care whether

anyone thinks them too small for baking, or too big for chips. As long as they please me, that is what matters. So this year, I did not waste money on seed. I bought two bags of spuds from the greengrocer, cut the big ones into two, or sometimes three, pieces on the advice of local gardeners, and planted those.

This gave rise to a scene in early April where Derek, our horseman, was drawing the furrows, while I followed him holding a sharp carving knife looking threateningly ready to assault him if the furrows were less than perfect. In fact, I was happily slicing away at spuds and dropping them into the soil, hoping for a decent crop, but not caring too much.

In years gone by, I have harrowed the ridges, sprayed the leaves with organic seaweed fertiliser, and watched for the first sign of blight with the trepidation of

one who might have lived through the Irish potato famine. This year I did none of these things. The field had already been liberally spread with the previous winter's collection of horse manure and trampled straw, and that was it. No fussing, no caring, no defection.

You can guess the result. Last weekend, we unearthed the fruits of our lack of labour. Instead of the puny, emaciated spuds of previous years, smaller than walnuts, we had potatoes of obscene proportions; white-skinned beauties of such monumental girth that few ovens will accommodate them whole. I exaggerate, but they were a damned good crop.

One of the reasons I gave up farming was because the strain of trying to get it right was beginning to tell. But the experience in the potato field tells me that perhaps I have been getting it wrong all these years. Trying too hard may have been my downfall. In the unlikely event of my starting again to farm, full-time, the first cow I buy had better understand that when she arrives on the farm, and the first thing I say to her is "Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn", I mean it.

An artist drawn to the wild



Sciater's monal pheasants by Timothy Greenwood

Oh, by Loch Tummel and Loch Rannoch and Lochaber I will go," says the old Scots song. The artist-naturalist Timothy Greenwood has so far got only as far as Loch Tummel — but since he was born in Chatham, Kent, it is quite a long way for him to have gone.

He lives in an enchanting 15th-century cottage on the side of the long, narrow Perthshire loch, 12 miles west of Pitlochry, and his studio window on the top floor looks down through trees on to the loch's silvery waters, where wigeon waddle and dippers bob on the stones.

Birds and animals come to his door. He showed me a stump in his herbaceous border where woodcock sit before venturing out on to his lawn at dusk — and sure enough, as we walked through the birch wood behind his cottage picking chanterelle mushrooms, we put up a woodcock that shot away against a background of silver firs.

For the past four years, however, he has been surrounded not so much by the wild life of Scotland as by exotic Asian pheasants. He has had stuffed pheasants on his desk and dead pheasants in his refrigerator, and he has visited private pheasant collections not only in Britain but in the birds' native forests in China, Pakistan and Nepal. He is the only wildlife artist to have seen the elusive local pheasants in all those places.

The reason for this is that he has been painting beautiful pictures of all the 48 species of pheasant in the world for a book that will be published on Monday — *The Atlas of Rare Pheasants*. It is a superb work, including his accurate and richly coloured illustrations and hand-painted maps of the areas in which each species is found, with a transparent overlay that marks in red the exact locations where they have recently been reported.

The book will be a collector's item. There will be 552 copies of Volume I bound in buckram cloth at £796, and 48 leather-bound copies — the same as the number of pheasant species — at £2,500. Volume II, at similar prices, will follow.

Three people have brought the book into being. The first is Greenwood, who has been a wildlife painter since he was a boy, and sold a painting of two

Derwent May visits the painter who captures pheasants



Watched by some of his stuffed pheasants, Greenwood works on one of his illustrations. He has painted all of the world's 48 species for *The Atlas of Rare Pheasants*



Greenwood rarely leaves Scotland, and is happiest on the shores of Loch Tummel in Perthshire

badgers for £2,000 to the Shell company in 1965, when he was 18. Soon afterwards, he was commissioned to do all the bird illustrations for the *Shell Natural History of Britain*.

Already in those boyhood days he used to run off to youth hostels, just to be alone in the wild. He was at Camberwell Art School in south London for a year, but decided he had had enough of it when his tutor said, shaking his head: "You're a 17th-century painter, Greenwood".

He first showed his work at Orpington Sketch Club, and was soon picked up by the Furness Gallery in London.

The second protagonist comes not from art but from pheasants. He is Keith Howman, the author of the book, a businessman from an Army family who has a large estate on the other side of Pitlochry. He became interested in the subject about 30 years ago. He

In boyhood days he used to run off to Scotland, sleeping in a tent or youth hostels, just to be alone in the wild

visited Barbara Cartland's house at a time when she was selling off some oriental pheasants. A gorgeous Elliot's pheasant escaped from the aviary while he was there, and he watched it soar over the trees. He was so struck by the sight that he bought the lot, and has been besotted with pheasants ever since.

His family, with two others, founded the World Pheasant Association in 1975. Its funds are small but it has done pioneering work in tracking down the surviving pheasants of the world, and setting up schemes to conserve them. It now has a great Chinese naturalist, Professor Cheng, as its president — the first man

Communist China has allowed to be president of an international organisation.

Howman started buying Greenwood's pictures early in the artist's career — he began with two capercaillies — and they have been friends for many years.

The third contributor is Simon Draper, the owner of Palawan Press, publishers of the book. He is a cousin of Richard Branson and was co-founder of Virgin Records. Now a rich man, he lives at Monkton, the Lutyns house in Sussex, once crowded with surrealist art, where the reclusive Edward James used to

live, and where Draper now houses his collections of Aston Martins and art, and rare pheasants in the woods.

He set up Palawan Press six years ago to produce magnificent books, naming it after the Palawan peacock-pheasant in the Philippines. He has already published four handsome illustrated books on cars, including *Aston Martin: The Complete Car*.

Meanwhile, the World Pheasant Association had also started publishing books, and Howman asked Draper if he would take on a reprint of an old pheasant classic. Draper did not want to do that, but out of their discussions emerged the idea of the new atlas. To complete the circle, Draper will give £50 to the World Pheasant Association for every copy of the book that is sold.

Back up at the Loch Tummel cottage, Greenwood is working steadily on another task connected with the book:

ON THE SPOT

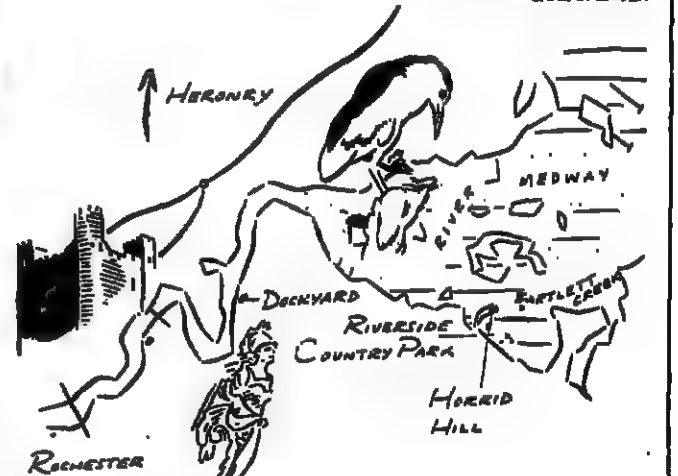
Rural recommendations
The Place: Horrid Hill, Gillingham, Kent

The View: to the right lie flat, green salt marshes and beyond these the Medway hills. Ahead are acres of mud flats and Bartlett Creek, which empties into the River Medway. On a clear day you can see Sheerness.

The appeal: peaceful area with extensive views of the Medway Estuary and its birdlife.

Adicionados: bird watchers and families.

Historical interest: the name Horrid Hill is reputed to derive from the poor condition of the ships that French prisoners were kept on during the Napoleonic Wars. The River Medway is renowned for its Royal Naval Dockyard that has seen 400 years of ship building — it was here that the celebrated HMS Victory, commanded by Nelson, was built. The folk tune



Waltzing Matilda was originally a Medway marching song sung by convicts en route to Australia.

Time to visit: before high tide. OS reference: 812/689 on sheet 178

How to get there: take the B2004 to Riverside Country Park and Horrid Hill path.

Also nearby: the Norman city of Rochester with its fine architecture, castle and cobbled high street. The Charles Dickens Centre highlights the author's many novels set in the area. Britain's largest heronry is 11 miles north.

DEBORAH KING

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WEEKEND COURSES AND ACTIVITIES

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OCTOBER 24-26

Halloween Craft Festival at Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey (01344 874787). Over 160 crafts and Halloween attractions on view during Saturday and Sunday. Adults, £2.50, Children, £1.00.

Seawords: A weekend celebration of the sea in literature at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, southeast London, with writers Alexander Kent, Hammond Jones and Libby Farrow, yachtsmen Robin Knox-Johnston and Tony Bullimore. Also book fair. Entrance to sessions £4.88. Details from National Museum (0181-312 6678).

Magical Music Weekend: At Brobury House, on the River Wye near Hereford (01981 500229). A special concert with guest soloist Kevin Tillet, formerly of D'Oyly Carte. Half-board accommodation for two nights and evening concert from £170.

Landscape photography: Willow basket making for beginners. Both this weekend at Alston Hall Residential College, Preston, Lancashire (01772 784661). From £75, inclusive. Walking in Constance country. Fungi weekend: Painting with pastels. Improve your sketching and drawing. At Flatford Mill Field Studies Centre, East Bergholt, Essex (01206 298283). From £72-£102, inclusive of tuition and full board.

Short story writing: Silk painting for beginners. Tailor: At Higham Hall, Cockermouth, Cumbria (017687 76276). From £112 residential. Battlefields of the Welsh Marches. Trees and shrubs in autumn: Family history. Who was grandma's grandma? At Field Studies Centre, Preston Montford, Shropshire (01743 850380). From £75-£99.

Positive ageing: Recorder ensembles. Painting with acrylics. At Belstead House Centre, Ipswich, Suffolk (01473 686321). From £75-£95, inclusive.

Painting autumn leaves and berries: Medieval art and



Learn about the role of the British in India at Missenden Abbey from October 24-26

architecture: Touching stillness: At Hill Residential College, Aberystwyth, South Wales (01495 333777). Price £88, full board and tuition included. Jane Austen, an appreciation. Folk weekend: Canal boat art Wood carving. At Knuston Hall, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire (01933 312104). From £89-£110, inclusive.

The British in India: Coromandel and Malabar. Autumn landscape painting. Indian textiles, their traditions and techniques. At Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (01494 890295). From £159 residential or £69 non-residential.

Stockmarket and investment for beginners: Map and compass work for improvers. Chinese brush painting. At the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, West Sussex (01798 865306). From £114, residential, £90 non-residential.

Activity weekend for singles: With Acorn Activities of Hereford (01432 830083), at the Dragon Hotel, Crickhowell. Abseiling, climbing, walking and canoeing available. Full

board and all activities from £175 per person.

OCT 31-NOV 2

Pottery weekend: At Rookery Hall, Nantwich, Chester (01270 610016). Visit the pottery workshops at Spode.



Study bats in Wales from Oct 31-Nov 2

Wedgwood and Royal Doulton: £95 per person, per night, inclusive of half-board accommodation and visits to the potteries. Gliding breaks. Learn to glide on a weekend break in the Cotswolds. From the Charingworth Manor Hotel, Chipping

Camden (01386 593555). Weekend rates from £200 per head, half-board, based on two people sharing. Gliding lessons from £75 per day or £32 for a trial flight. Walking or cycling weekends. In the Cotswolds with Compass Holidays (01242 520642). Price includes itineraries, information pack and two nights' B&B accommodation. Cycle hire available. Cycling breaks £88: walking breaks £95.

Health and fitness breaks: At Combe Grove Manor Hotel and Country Club (01225 834644). Indoor pool, gym, golf course, hydro and spa. Price £390 based on two people sharing, half-board.

Outdoor activities: For all age groups with the Youth Hostels Association at Edale, Derbyshire, and Langollen, North Wales. Cycling, hang-gliding, paragliding, caving, climbing and kayaking. From £93 per person, including full-board accommodation and instruction. For full details call 01727 845047.

Bat and birdwatching weekends: At Pannanochaf Hall Hotel, Dolgellau, Gwynedd

(01341 422129). Five different varieties of bat can be seen in the hotel attic, including the lesser horseshoe bat. Weekend rates from £125, including half-board accommodation, access to attic bat-flying areas and Bat Pack. Landscape drawing. Painting in autumn: At Leonard Wells Centre, Nettlecombe Court, Taunton, Somerset (01984 640320). Prices, including full board and tuition, from £184.

Singing for the tone deaf: Framing and mounting pictures. Archaeological walks and talks along the River Arun: At the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, West Sussex (01798 865306). From £114 residential and £90 non-residential.

NOVEMBER 7-9

Poetry and prose of the Great War: Chamber music for amateurs. Modern gardening. Hat-making for beginners: At Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (01494 890295). Prices £159 residential, £69 non-residential.

Bridge weekend: A wildlife weekend. In Powys. Both with Acorn Activities of Hereford (01432 830083). From £125, all inclusive.

Drama workshops: Playwriting and teddy bears: At the Unicorn Theatre for Children, Arts Theatre, Great Newport Street, London WC2 (0171-379 3280). £7.50 per session.

Calligraphy and cards: Writing memoirs. Cities of the Baltic (art history): At Belstead House, Ipswich, Suffolk (01473 686321). From £75-£95 inclusive.

Woodland wildlife in autumn: Painting plants. Improve your watercolours: At Flatford Mill, East Bergholt, Essex (01206 298283). From £79-£102, inclusive. Making the most of your camera: Portrait techniques. Decoupage: At Hill Residential Centre, Aberystwyth (01495 333777). Price per course, £88.

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meaning Chinese brush painting: At Knuston Hall, Irchester, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire (01933 312104). From £89, inclusive. Fish and vegetarian cookery weekend: Learn to cope with vegetarian dinner guests with demonstrations and lessons in the kitchen. At Ynysir Hall, Machynlleth, Mid-Wales (01654 781209). Price £170, inclusive.

Smallholder workshops: At the Rare Breeds Centre,

Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent (01233 861493). Courses on keeping sheep, poultry, pigs, ducks and geese. From £18 per session. B&B accommodation available nearby. Buying and owning a PC: Write a short story. Painting wet in wet. Relax with raffia: At the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, West Sussex (01798 865306). From £114 residential and £90 non-residential.

Medieval and Renaissance

palaces of Europe: At the University of Oxford, Rawley House, Oxford (01865 270360). Price £44.

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History, elegance and touches of eccentricity . . . the charm of Ireland knows no frontier, says **John Ardagh**

Beauty on the border of peace



Are we in the North or the South? asked my wife, as we drove down an Irish country road. "I've no idea," I said. This is now one of Europe's most invisible frontiers. At almost every crossing, even on main roads, there is no sign of a border, no control post: the Army, keeping a low profile, has removed most of the checkpoints where its squadrons once brandished automatic rifles.

Of course, the North still has its problems, but the latest round of talks is gradually contributing to a slow optimism about the peace process, and you should not be deterred from exploring the delightful border region from Down to Donegal, which offers good sailing, golf and riding, handsome old towns with fine museums, such as Derry and Monaghan, and some splendid scenery (the Fermanagh lakes, Mourne and Donegal hills). The charm of Ireland knows no frontier.

There are some remarkable hotels on both sides of the border, as I found on a recent visit for *The Good Hotel Guide*. Some are spruce guest-houses with sophisticated cooking. Some are that familiar Irish genre, the stately home run in warm personal style by its ancestral owners.

The most amazing is Castle Leslie (1878), a hefty hulk in a big park in Co Monaghan. The ruled Leslie family, beguiling eccentrics who claim descent from Anilla the Hun, have crammed it to the rafters with Victorian and run it in high Victorian style, party tongue-in-cheek.

The urbane Sir John, fourth baronet, presides. The driving spirit is ebullient young Samantha (Sammy) Leslie, who co-manages, and cooks rather well. We enjoyed her filler of oyster and silver in the candlelit banquet hall. Waitresses wore Victorian dress with caps, of course.

Our big bedroom (four-poster, red velvet drapes) was authentically Victorian, and its bathroom even more so, with a real wooden "thunder-box" too. Other bedrooms have been decked out in wacky Victorian style, some truly beautiful, some comic.

The grandiose public rooms have fine tapestries, suits of armour, plus other heirlooms of this much-travelled family — a lovely painted Della Robbia fireplace (1491) from Florence, a harp given by Wordsworth and an emerald bracelet from the Empress of China.

The Leslies offer business and tourist banquets, where Sammy, in hooded Victorian cloak, tells ghost stories of this haunted house (a child was murdered in one bed). The family enjoy sending themselves up. In the main too is a big notice taken from an old railway line: "Go slowly round the bend."

Also by the border, Hilton Park, near Clones, is another grand mansion now run as a private hotel, but in more discreet style. Since 1735 it has been the home of Johnnie Madden's family. He and his wife, Lucy, are civilised hosts: she cooks superbly, and we liked the elegant bedrooms and landscaped park.

Nearby we found a startling contrast — the 145-bedroom Slieve Russell Hotel, owned and built (in 1991) by the millionaire Sean Quinn, a local Citizen Kane who has a concrete-making factory just across the border in the North.

He was thought crazy to create this giant luxury palace in the middle of nowhere; but it has been the talk of Ireland as it blazes into the night, with floodlit fountain, Euro-flag flying, its foyer a forest of Roman pillars.

Visitors are drawn by its lovely golf course, swimming pool and disco, often packed with 1,000 people. Co Cavan had never seen anything like it. Comparing it with Hilton Park, the Dublin writer Colm Toibin said: "After centuries of poverty, misery and revolt, this is rural Catholic Ireland declaring its right to build 'big houses' too. New money rises up in all its vulgarity — two Irelands within a few miles of each other."

Another cross-border tourist venture has been the reopening of the 1860s canal linking the upper Shannon with Lough Erne in Fermanagh. Elegantly restored, with new



Shadows on the grass: visit tranquil Devenish Island, in Co Fermanagh, where a high, pointed tower marks the ruins of a 6th-century monastery

automatic locks, it is popular with those who take hired cabin cruisers on these rivers.

Near Enniskillen, the Erne widens into two beautiful lakes; a yachtsman's playground. And of those who hire, its boats, more than half are German and nearly a quarter are Swiss. One reason given for this is that the German and Swiss media reports little about the North's troubles so their nationals are less deterred from visiting.

Fermanagh is a hilly, scenic county, full of interest. We visited the Marble Arch Caves with their floodlit, underground lake: Castle Coole, grandly restored; and the ceramics factory at Belleek. Tiny Devenish Island holds the evocative ruins of a 6th-century monastery, with a high pointed tower.

Not far away, Tempo Manor is another stately home hotel full of Victoriana, but run in a low-key approach by its family scion, John Langham. The food was nothing special, but we loved the romantic gardens and lake.

Enniskillen is a handsome old town, emerging from the black image it was tarred with by the 1987 IRA bomb blast that killed 11 people. Its urban renewal is impressive, notably the charming Buttermarket, now full of craft workshops. In July 1996 another bomb — the work of an autonomous group — wrecked the Killyhevlin Hotel. But no one was hurt,

and it has been rebuilt. Since 1994 the Army has reopened some of the roads it had blocked by the border and has rebuilt some bridges — but not all. At Aghalane hamlet, the road bridge over the river is still in ruins.

In this otherwise idyllic setting, neighbours in their

pretty thatched cottages look wistfully at each other: they must drive many miles to meet.

I felt an uncanny sense of déjà vu. Where had I seen that before? Answer, more than eight years ago, by a river on a far more lethal border, dividing villages in the German

states of Hessen and Thuringia. We drove north to Derry, my favourite Irish town. Since the desolate years following the Bogside riots, this superb ramparted hilltop city has been finely restored and revitalised, largely through local initiative.

The two communities still live apart in segregated housing, and the town centre suffered briefly again from angry violence in July. But today it is throbbing with cultural activity, new shops and boutiques, a craft village, and a marvellous new museum that traces the city's dramatic history, via the Siege of

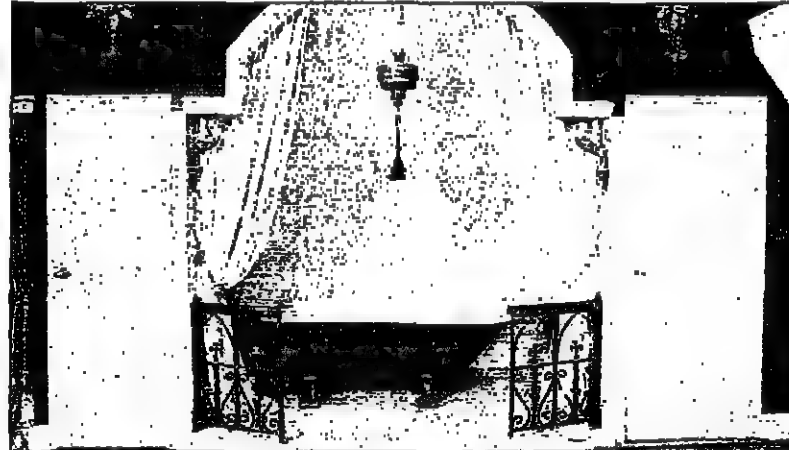
FACT FILE

■ How to get there: Irish Ferries (0990 171717), Stena Line (0990 707070), Swansons Cork Ferries (01792 456116), Hoverspeed/Isle of Man Steam Packet Company (0345 525252) and P&O Ferries (0990 980980) all operate to Ireland. Sample prices with Stena Line: Holyhead to Dublin, five-day return (car plus up to five passengers) £174; Stranraer to Belfast, five-day return (car plus two passengers) around £150.

British Airways (0345 222111) and Jersey European Airways (0990 676676) fly from (or via) various English cities to City of Derry Airport. Sample prices: Gatwick to Derry (via Manchester or Glasgow) with BA, from £192; Gatwick (via Belfast) to Derry, with JEA, from £114.

Car rental: John Ardagh hired a car from Dan Dooley Car Rental (00 353 62 53103); from £175 for one week.

■ Where to stay: (Dinner prices are per person. B&B prices are per person unless otherwise stated.) Castle Leslie, Glasnagh, Co Monaghan (00 353 47 88109), 14 rooms. Closed two weeks Jan. B&B £38-£47. Dinner £21-£25. Hilton Park, Clones, Co Monaghan (00 353 47 56007). Open April-Sept. Seven rooms. B&B £47-£61. Dinner £23. Slieve Russell, Ballyconnell, Co Cavan (00 353 49 26414), 145 rooms. B&B from £63. Dinner £24. Tempo Manor, Tempo, Co Fermanagh



Luxury on tap: the elegant bathroom at Castle Leslie, Co Monaghan

(01365 541450). Open March-Oct. Five rooms. B&B £50. Dinner £25. Beech Hill House, 32 Ardmore Road, Derry, Co Londonderry (01504 349279). Closed Christmas. 17 rooms. B&B £57-£62. Dinner £23. Rathmullan House, Rathmullan, Co Donegal (00 353 74 50189). Open March-Nov. 20 rooms. B&B £36-£56. Dinner £23. Castle Grove House, Ramelton Road, Letterkenny, Co Donegal (00 353 74 51118). Closed Christmas. 15 rooms. B&B £32-£45. Dinner £22.

Portaferry Hotel, Portaferry, Co Down (01247 725231). Closed Christmas. 13 rooms. B&B £55-£90. Dinner £22-£50. Glassdrumman Lodge, 85 Mill Road, Annalong, Co Down (01396 768451). Ten rooms. B&B £85-£125 per room. Dinner £29-£50.

(All except the Slieve Russell are in *The Good Hotel Guide 1998*, just published by Ebury Press at £12.99).

■ Further information: The Irish Tourist Board (0171-518 0800); the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (054 555250).

1689, the Famine, and the Bogside "massacre" of 1972. We stayed nearby at an excellent country hotel, Beech Hill House: its lounge is a lively local meeting place.

We enjoyed two other mansion hotels, in Donegal beside Lough Swilly, an unattractive fiord-like inlet. Here, Castle Grove — late 17th century, popular for weddings — has a warm and charming young manageress. Set in gardens by the lough, Rathmullan House offers imaginative "new Irish" cooking. Rathmullan village is full of unspoilt Donegal melancholy.

Finally, we found two more delightful hotels in Co Down. The Portaferry, set serenely by Strangford Lough, is a quayside pub with a lively ambience, smart young staff and a breezily urbane owner, John Herlihy.

At Annalong, where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down (almost) to the sea, Glassdrumman Lodge is a stylishly converted old farmhouse, graceful yet cosy, with good food and lovely bedrooms. Many guests are American golfers (with Irish roots) who burst into tears when the owner's teenage daughter, freckled and russet-haired, sings *Danny Boy*.

● John Ardagh is the author of *Ireland and the Irish Penguin, £7.99*. He is also *continental* and Irish editor of *The Good Hotel Guide*; the 1998 edition has just been published.

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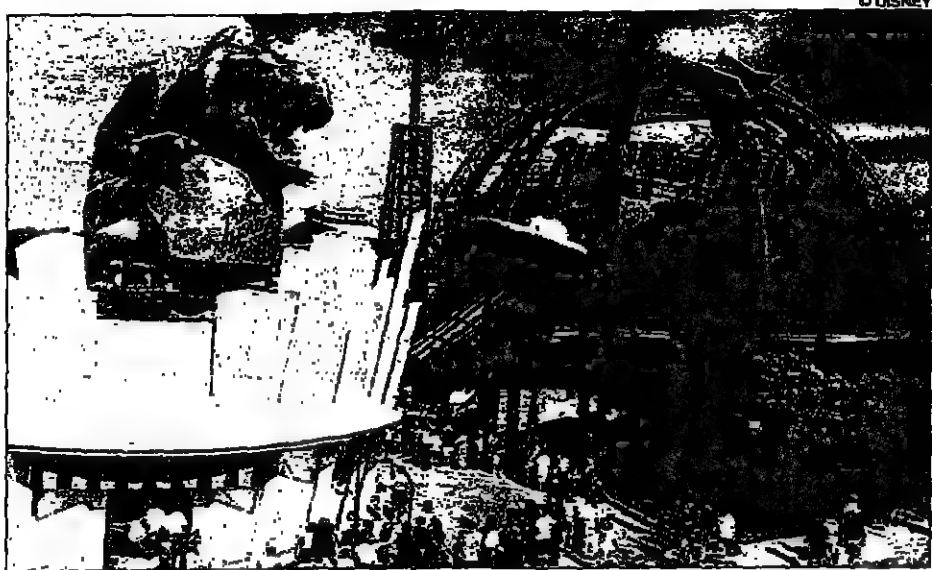
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Studies at the Universal of life



Child-friendly Planet Hollywood pulls the crowds at Disney-MGM

Paul Abse took his offspring to Orlando, where the real meets the surreal and every dream is fulfilled

My children, aged 11 and eight, were veteran theme-parkers who had been training for The Big One all their lives. But would Orlando beat Thorpe Park, Disneyland Paris or Spain's Port Aventura? Are Chelsea FC better than Hereford United?

The most popular place on Earth does not consist of just a couple of Disney theme parks. Many cities have devoted themselves to pleasure — Rome, Paris, London, New York — but none as single-mindedly as Orlando.

The current count is about 80 attractions. "Magical" is the most overused but apposite adjective. You will find it littering every hoarding, flyer and conversation, from the hotel clerk's "Have a magical day" as you first step into the lobby, to Epcot's "Have a magical tomorrow", and the Disney Channel's final flickering "Magical Dreams" as you take out.

Orlando's magic makes everything possible. You want pink trees? We've got pink trees. You want the Munich Beer Festival? No problem. The Great Wall of China? Coming up. You want to join a rock band? Here's a stringless guitar you can play like an idiot without all that bothersome learning to play. And if you are planning a wedding to coincide with your

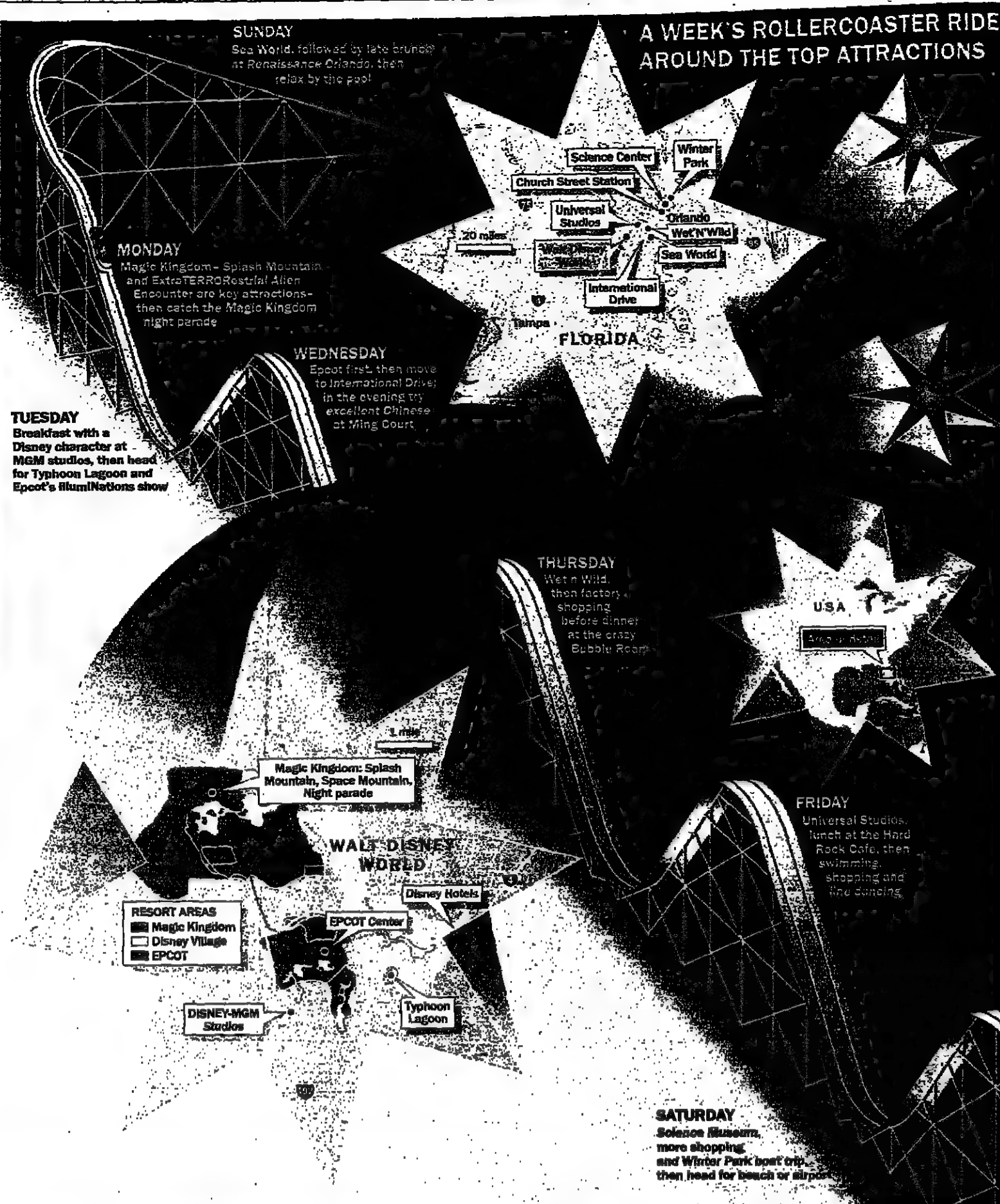
visit, you are in luck: we have our own chapel, so you can now have Mickey as best mouse.

One delightfully cool early morning as we scampered between Space Mountain and Splash Mountain, a grey heron landed in front of us. We almost expected it to start animatronically strutting. The line between the real and the unreal dissolves into the surreal in Orlando. I have known a couple of people who detested the place, but then they're miseries anyway. We had an absolute ball.

If you fork out a fortune to take the family, you should go the extra mile: stay at a Disney hotel so you get into its theme parks ahead of the mob (some of its newer, cheaper resorts even compete with the prices on International Drive), hire a car so you have the freedom to see all of Orlando's different faces (check which operator does the best "free" car-hire package) and plan your park assaults like Monty did his Africa campaign.

As we passed a Miami University coach at the end of our week (and you'll need a week to do Orlando justice), eight-year-old Max said: "When I'm big I'm going to Universal — not university." Need I say more?

AMERICA: THEME PARKS



BEST OF THE PARKS

Sea World (001 407 351 3600)
The most civilised and easy day. Great shows and just the one simulator thrill ride, Wild Arctic, offering close encounters with polar bears, caribou, walrus, white beluga whale, avalanches and blizzards. Go first thing to avoid queues. Plan around these: Shamoo: World Focus — the big show. Flips and jumps by killer whales with trainers riding shotgun. Anyone sitting in the first 14 rows will be drenched (we sat separately from our children). Key West Dolphin Fest provides more thrills and spills. You should also check Dolphin Cove eating times, where the kids can buy fish and have the dolphins eat out of their hands. There's a limit on numbers, so get there early. Best of the rest (visit any time): Stingray Lagoon: Buy a dollar box of small fish and the rays will snatch them out of your hands. Terrors of the Deep: Walk through the glass tunnel and imagine what it would be like if it gave way and you had hammerheads, great whites, tiger sharks and moray eels joining you. A sign declares humankind as the ultimate "terror of the deep" — hard to believe after seeing all that lot. Manatees: The Last Generation. Florida's sea cows, threatened with extinction from Florida's motorboats, are thought to be the source of the

mermaid myths. All I can say is those sailors must have been at sea an awfully long time to fantasise about these uglies. Chilling out: when they're tired of schlepping between pavilions, let the children romp for an hour in the excellent adventure playground while you stoke up on caffeine at the adjacent café.

Magic Kingdom (939 7704)
Plan around: Main Street Parade or Evening Parade. Hit list, in diminishing queue times: Under the Sea: Peter Pan's Flight. Pirates of the Caribbean (recommended ages 6 and up). Dumbo the Flying Elephant. Mad Tea Party. Legend of the Lion King. Tomorrowland Speedway. Eight and up: Splash Mountain. Big Thunder Mountain Railroad. Ten and up: ExtraTERRORrestrial Alien Encounter. Space Mountain — both will scare those afraid of the dark. Chilling out: Tomorrowland Transit Authority — shuttles above Tomorrowland, entering Space Mountain and other attractions.

Disney-MGM Studios (939 7704)
Plan around: Toy Story Parade, plus Indiana Jones Epic Stunt Spectacular (see it as early as possible), both good for all ages. Beauty and the Beast and Hunchback of Notre Dame (live 25-minute Broadway-style production); best for the under-tens. After 10am arrive at shows 25 minutes before the start to get

HOW TO GET A PIECE OF THE ACTION



Taking the plunge at Blizzard Beach, Walt Disney World

In. Visit first: Twilight Zone Tower of Terror — holograms, spooks and a 13-floor free-falling lift plummet. Great fun but not before breakfast. The Great Movie Ride. Chilling out: Honey I Shrunk the Kids Movie Set playground with everything mega-size will keep children under 12 entranced.

Later: The Backstage Studio Tour. MuppetVision 4-D. Voyage of the Little Mermaid are good for all ages. Eight-year-olds up will get most out of The Great Movie Ride. Chilling out: Honey I Shrunk the Kids Movie Set playground with everything mega-size will keep children under 12 entranced.

Epcot (939 7704)
Plan around: Nightly IllumiNations show. Visit first: Try to do these as early as possible as they can attract long queues — Body Wars. Cranium Command (both simulator rides best for over-sixes); Honey I Shrunk the Audience. Spaceship Earth (any age). Later: Living with the Land. Horizons, and the Innovations pavilions, for arcade games and cutting edge technology. Chilling out: Global Neighbourhood, an interactive communications playground at the end of the Spaceship Earth ride, plus The Image Works, another creative playground with visual tricks in the Journey into Imagination Pavilion. When you've exhausted Future World, you still have the half of the theme park known as World Showcase to explore. My children found it boring, although they quite

liked the rides in Mexico and Norway (expect long queues). Skip The American Adventure's patriotic blather at all costs. Chilling out: A boat ride across the lagoon is relaxing and saves the legs.

Universal Studios (363 8003)
Best rides in town but poorest shows. The wealthy can book four-hour VIP Tours for £64 each (reservations 363 8295), which gets you in ahead of the queues. Larger and better than Disney-MGM, and a new separate, adjacent Universal theme park centred on different islands (including Jurassic Park) is planned to open by 2000. Hercules is a newly opened interactive show in which audience members can take part in films set in Roman times.

Plan around: At present Wild, Wild West Stunt Show is as exciting as the shows get but feels tired and dated.

Do first: Terminator 2 3-D (aged eight and over). Back to the Future (simulator ride for sixes and up). E.T. Adventure and the Fantastic World of Hanna-Barbera (any age). Later: Kongfrontation, Earthquake and Jaws (best for seven and up); Nickelodeon Studios and Grottoes Horror Make-Up Show (any age). Chilling out: Production Tram Tour — save the fast and see all the outdoor sets.

ORLANDO BLUEPRINT

Ideally, split the week between Disney Village accommodation and a hotel on International Drive, where it is easier to do Wet 'n' Wild, Universal, outlet mall shopping, Winter Park and Main Street. If your package prevents you splitting your week, opt for Disney accommodation for the whole week, as it's probably best to spend a week there than on International Drive.

Be at the park gates 20 minutes before opening time and get out by 1pm. Swim at your hotel pool and snooze in the afternoon before heading back to the park or elsewhere in the evening.

Sunday: Sea World, followed by late Sunday brunch at Renaissance Orlando (351 5555) across the street (it is pricey at £19 for adults and £9.50 for children aged four to 12, but it's a gargantuan buffet and you won't need to eat again that day). Hotel pool in the afternoon.

Monday: Magic Kingdom: head for Splash Mountain or

Big Thunder Mountain Railroad; then recover at the hotel pool. In the evening, Magic Kingdom night parade.

Tuesday: Disney-MGM Studios: book a Disney "character" breakfast — at which Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and friends stroll around and meet the kids while you are eating (£17.80 for breakfast for a family of four). After doing the big rides, including Star Tours, you can relax. Afternoon: Typhoon Lagoon, dinner Planet Hollywood (if you can bear two-hour queues — no pre-booking) or TGI Fridays at the Crossroads (827 1020). Epcot's IllumiNations laser and fireworks show 9pm.

Wednesday: If moving to International Drive hotel, check out and pack car before heading to the Epcot (its best lunch is at its Marrakech restaurant). Transfer to new hotel (the Delta Orlando, offered by Thomson, is four-star and next door to Universal). Eat at Ming Court (351 9988), Orlando's best Chinese, where main courses are about £8.

Thursday: Wet 'n' Wild. Belz shopping outlets, dinner at the wacky Bubble Room — which specialises in huge burgers, chips, ribs and enormous slices of chocolate cake — where a family of four will pay about £57 with drinks.

Friday: Universal, Hard Rock lunch, afternoon shopping and hotel pool. Evening: Church Street Station (422 2434), a dining and shopping

Continued on facing page

DESTINATION KILIMANJARO

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Later this year we shall be operating the first non-scheduled flight service from London Gatwick to Kilimanjaro — the gateway to the great game parks of Africa. The service, in being direct, presents the traveller with a convenient means of witnessing the wildlife wonders of the great parks at a remarkably low price that represents a saving of many hundreds of pounds from the tariffs normally available and without the tedium of routing via other countries. Should you have always wanted to visit these wonderful locations but have been dissuaded by the high cost, then this is an opportunity that should not be missed. As we are initially limiting the available places to just 20 per departure it is essential that early telephone reservations are made to avoid disappointment.

Itinerary in Brief

Fly by Monarch Airlines Boeing 757 via Luxor to Kilimanjaro airport 30 miles from Arusha, the gateway to the great game parks such as the Serengeti, Manara, Arusha, Tarangire and the Ngongoro Crater. Our hotel is the Mt Meru Novotel at the foot of Mt Meru situated in 15 acres of lush gardens. The 168 guestrooms and suites come with full facilities and air-conditioning. The hotel is under European management and boasts three restaurants, a number of bars and a lounge.

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DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES

Tuesdays - per person in a twin
1997 Nov 4, 18 - £415; Dec 2, 9, 16 - £495
Dec 23 - £645; Dec 30 - £515
1998 Jan 6, 13, 20, 27 - £545
Feb 3, 10, 17, 24 - £570; Mar 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 - £595
Single room supplement £195

Zanzibar - it is possible to extend your stay with a 7-night stay on the beautiful island of Zanzibar. Supplement from £295 per person (single £395).

Price includes: air (travel) subject to minimum numbers, transfers, 7 nights accommodation at the Mt Meru Hotel, breakfast only, local guides, 17% departure tax, but excludes: travel insurance, overseas airport taxes, visa (payment), tips, excursions, 1st class current Combi-tourist (if applicable) and baggage shall apply to all travellers.

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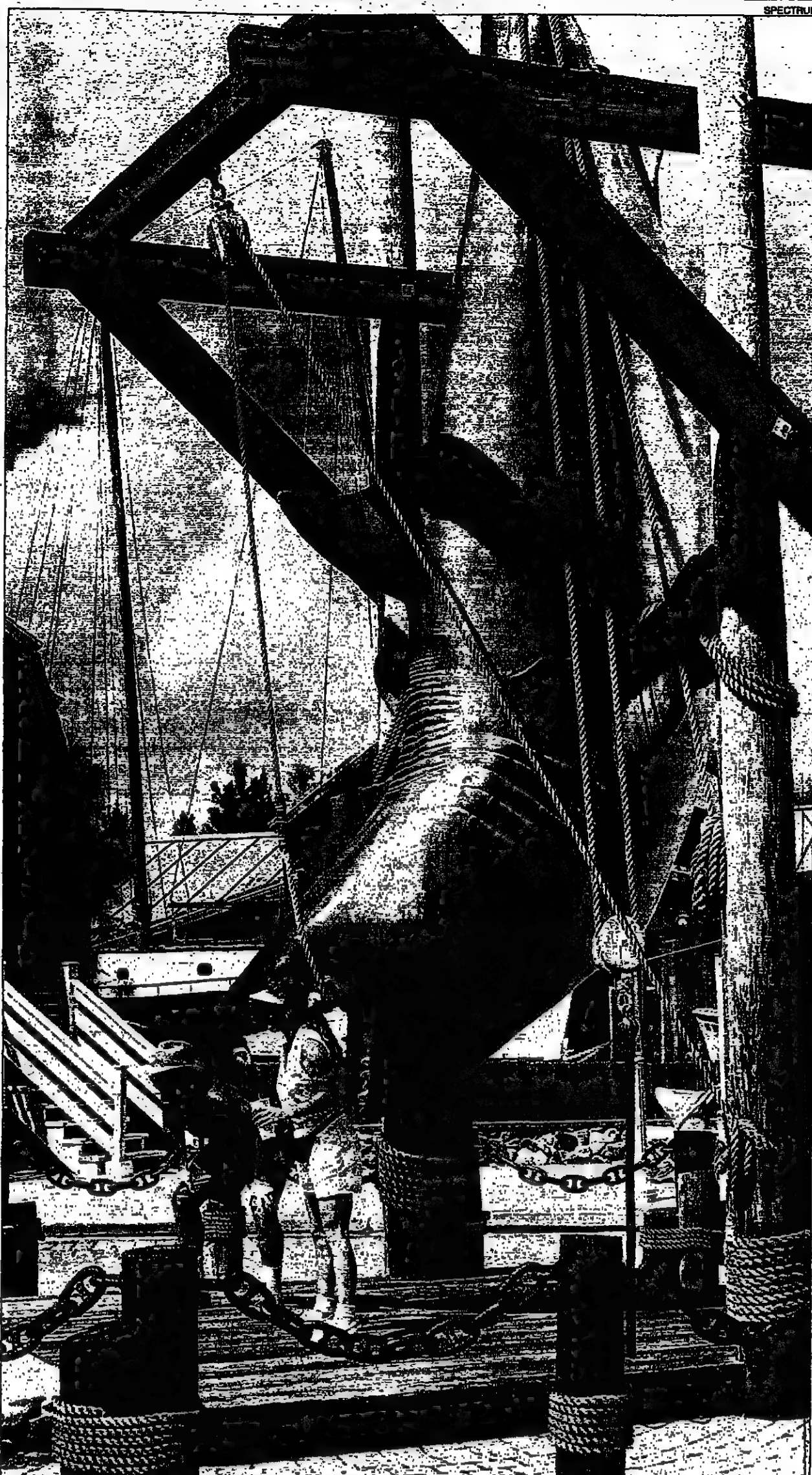
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PICARDIE

AMERICA: THEME PARKS



Some 22 years after first frightening cinema audiences, Jaws remains a major attraction at Universal Studios

Continued from facing page
complex. Dinner at the Cheyenne — try line dancing after you have eaten the ribs of what must have been a mammoth. Buzzing night-time scene in revamped railway station area, part of the complex. Just stroll around the shops or pay single admission (£11.40 for adults and £7 for children aged four to 12) to visit its clubs, which play dance music, jazz, rock 'n' roll and country and western.

Saturday: 9am Science Museum. 11am Park Avenue shopping, then elegant courtyard lunch at Park Plaza Gardens (645 2475). In the afternoon stroll around Park Avenue's chi-chi shops before taking the one-hour Winter Park boat tour, before transferring to your second week beach base or back to the airport for the flight home.

LIFESAVING TIPS

The best deals on accommodation, flights and park tickets are found through UK-based tour operators. For those

SIMPLY THE BEST

Best theme park: Universal. Best fun family restaurant: Bubble Room (001 407 628 3331) near the Winter Park. Best water park: Wet 'n' Wild (351 1800), which still has the best slides by a mile. Best museums: The new Orlando Science Center (514 2000), and Ripley's Believe It Or Not! (363 4418). Best guidebooks: *The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World* by Bob Sehlinger (Macmillan Travel £10.99). Best rides: Back to the Future (Universal) and the £3.90 (£6) one-hour Scenic Boat Tour (644 4056) in the gorgeous Winter Park. Best attractions: Terminator 2 (Universal). Best shows: Disney-MGM Indiana Jones Stunt Spectacular; *The Living Sea* shot in IMAX at the CineDome in the Orlando Science Center.

going independently, the best ticket deals are the four-day Value Pass (£85, children aged three to nine £68) to the Magic Kingdom, Disney-MGM and Epcot, or the Five-Day World Hopper Pass, which gives five days' entry to these, with seven days' entry to Pleasure Island and Disney's water parks thrown in (£138 for adults and £110 for children aged three to nine). The Three-Park Vacation Value Pass allows five days' unlimited entry to Universal, Sea World and Wet 'n' Wild and costs £60 for adults.

EO for children aged three to nine. The Official Visitor Center on International Drive (363 5872) has discount tickets and bookable-on-the-day discounted accommodation.

Staying in the Disney Village allows early entry into its theme parks ahead of the mob, and you are guaranteed admission during the busiest holiday periods. Rooms sleeping four can cost as little as £44 at the All-Star Resort. Pick up the diary of the day's events on entry at each theme park, plan around shows, then

hoof it to the best rides. By 10.30am, these will have hour-long queues. Take a bottle of water and refill from fountains to keep costs down. A few apples are a good idea too.

If you are planning a one-off trip to Wet 'n' Wild, you'll get half-price admission after 4pm. Take children's swimming costumes for better still, put them on under their clothes) and dry T-shirts. There's an excuse to get soaked just about everywhere.

Skip Pleasure Island unless you are going without the children — the clubs and entertainment are not for kids. The themed nights at the hotels and dinner-shows are overpriced and the food generally dull.

A hire car which many operators throw in for free (although the costly insurance and other incidentals are extra) is essential. Take Disney transport to the Magic Kingdom, as the car park feels as if it is several states away. Otherwise drive everywhere yourself to avoid delays in the sweltering heat.

End of an EO for Disney

The big screen
hero played by
Michael Jackson
has fought his
last battle, says
David Churchill

So farewell Michael Jackson, goodbye *Captain EO*. The extravaganza 3-D film featuring the rock superstar as a *Star Wars*-style character fighting the Evil Queen (played by Anjelica Huston) has finished after more than a decade on the silver screen at the Disneyland theme park in Anaheim, California.

Captain EO's end has absolutely nothing to do with Jackson's somewhat tarnished reputation, insists Disney, but is rather an attempt to update the Disneyland image which, after more than 40 years, is beginning to look a little out of tune with the demands of the modern theme park visitor.

Jackson, who is being replaced by another 3-D film, *Honey I Shrunk the Audience*, with the nerdy Rick Moranis reprising his screen role, is not the only long-term casualty of Disneyland's desire to bring itself up to date.

The evergreen nighttime show, the Main Street Electric Light Parade, has been scrapped after more than 25 years of nightly performances when motorised floats, decorated with 500,000 light bulbs, made their way slowly around the 85-acre park.

In its place is a new and rather bland show called Light Magic, which utilises 1,600 miles of state-of-the-art fibre optic technology on four moving stages. On these, 32 Disney characters perform songs and dances from various musical spectacles, some of which seem to have more than a passing resemblance to the *Riverdance* phenomenon.

The Disneyland move towards the millennium has only just started. Next year sees the opening of a totally revamped Tomorrowland, one of the six themed lands that make up the park, with new rides and attractions including the latest interactive virtual reality games.

And in 2001 is the biggest extension so far to Disneyland, a new \$1.5 billion (£930 million) theme park called Disney's California Adventure.

This will offer visitors a Disney view of Californian life — everything from movie studios to the National Parks — although given that the real thing is on the door-step, the concept seems strange. Maybe the Imagineers — the Disney people who dream up the ideas and rides — really do think tourists prefer the sanitised Disney view of the world to the reality.

Returning to Disneyland after a gap of several years — my preferred Disney destination is Walt Disney World in Orlando — I can easily see why it pales in comparison with the huge, brash resort complex that has grown up in central Florida.

Whereas Disney World is a purpose-built themed destination about the size of Greater Manchester, Disneyland is far smaller in comparison, tucked away amid the freeways, strip malls, electricity pylons and the general urban blight that goes to make up the sprawling city of Los Angeles.

When Walt Disney opened the Disneyland park in 1955, the area was all orange groves and farms — but not for long. Disney could only afford to buy a limited amount of land, and the surrounding area quickly filled up with tacky motels and malls to cash in on the park's growing popularity. (At Disney World, Disney ensured that more land than needed was acquired to ensure this was not repeated.)

The new theme park — which is being built on the existing car park, with motorists bussed in from further out — will give Disneyland more of a resort feel. But will it be enough to restore Disneyland to its status as a must-see destination for the Californian holidaymaker?

Disneyland offers homage to the original theme park concept: a main-gate entrance with a central hub, off which several themed lands are located. It is a style copied by virtually all UK and Continental theme parks, such as Alton Towers, and officially replicated at Orlando and Paris.

On the plus side for would-be visitors, Disneyland has attractions unique to its location. The Indiana Jones Adventure, for example, is the world's costliest and most complex theme park attraction, combining aircraft-simulator technology with an indoor roller-coaster ride



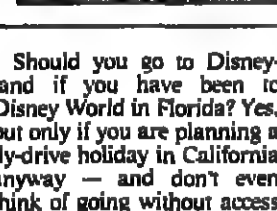
The Matterhorn Bobsleds claims vintage status among Californian rollercoasters

FACT FILE

■ David Churchill travelled with British Airways Holidays (01293 723121) and Disneyland.

■ A seven-night room-only stay at the Disneyland Hotel, which includes round-trip flights and car hire, costs from £819 per person in 1998. Current prices are £880 per person from November 1 to December 12.

■ Disneyland (0990 200605) charges \$36 (£23) at the gate for adults, \$27 (£17) for children. Keith Prowse Attractions (01232 232425) has a five-day pass for £39.50 (£29.50 children). Useful guides: *Birnbaum's Disneyland 1997* (Hyperion Books, \$10.95); *The Unofficial Guide to Disneyland 1997* (Prentice Hall Travel, \$12.95).



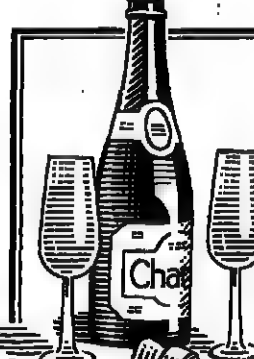
Should you go to Disneyland if you have been to Disney World in Florida? Yes, but only if you are planning a fly-drive holiday in California anyway — and don't even think of going without access to a car.

Arrive early, and you can easily do most of the key Disneyland attractions in a day, although a day and a half would give you more flexibility.

Staying at either of the two Disney-operated hotels close

to the park is convenient, but not essential, especially as the refurbished resort facilities are nothing special (unlike the hotels in Disney World, where the hotel is part of the whole resort experience).

And don't worry if you really wanted to see Michael Jackson as Captain EO again, or watch the Electric Light Parade. Both are still running at Disney's poor relation theme park outside Paris, although their days there are also reportedly numbered.



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AWAY DAYS: OLD TRAFFORD



Colour me red: face painting on the way to the game

All fired up for the big match

Tony Kelly and United-mad nephew sample the Old Trafford experience

Two minutes into my first match at Old Trafford, and Matt, my nephew, was in good voice. "Cole, Cole, Andy Cole. He gets the ball, he scores a goal. A-a-Andy Cole," he sang with a thousand others, saluting the striker who had just given Manchester United the lead. "It's a good job my music teacher isn't here," said Matt as he sat down.

Matt, 15, has supported United for years. He could reel off the players' statistics — but, like many fans, he had never been to a home match. Neither had I, for that matter, though I had followed United since the Sixties, when George Best and Bobby Charlton were my heroes. So when I heard about weekend packages to Old Trafford, including tickets to a game, I leapt at the chance — and took Matt along too.

We settled on an early-season game against Coventry. Outside the ground, touts sold tickets, children had their faces painted in United colours, and the smell of frying onions hung heavy in the air.

Hawkers sold copies of rival fanzines — *Red Attitude*, *Red Issue*, *United We Stand* — all full of sneering remarks about "day-trippers with their megastore bags". We slipped into our seats in the South Stand, trying to look as if this was something we did every week.

You would never know it from seeing the pitch at Old Trafford on the TV, but the ground is not flat. Sitting just three rows from the front, we were below the level of the centre circle, and when the action was on the far side of the field, we had to play spot-the-ball without being able to see the players' legs.

But it was still an excellent place to sit. We could almost touch Beck's Byline and Giggsy's perm; we could glance at the managers in their dugouts, Alex Ferguson chewing gum throughout, and hear Coventry's Gordon Strachan bellowing instructions to his players.

In truth, it wasn't a great game. United sat on their lead,



Sir Matt Busby's statue



Red devil of a day: A young Manchester United fan gets a close look at his favourite team in action

creating few chances until skipper Roy Keane scrambled the ball in for a second goal after 71 minutes.

The silent crowd suddenly became animated. "Keane, Keane, Roy Keane, scores some goals, know what I mean, Roy Keane," they chanted as one. Actually, I made that bit up. What they really sang, chanted repeatedly, was "Keane".

People were already drifting away when the Czech sub Karel Poborsky scored in injury time to give United a scarcely deserved 3-0 win. "I'm sorry you didn't get a better game," I said to Matt after the final whistle. He didn't care. "I feel a part of United at last," he said.

We had dinner at the Red Café, United's themed restaurant, where banks of video screens replayed endless goals while we tucked into Cajun chicken and chips — sorry,

fries. Then it was back to the Ramada Hotel — quite a treat for a 15-year-old boy. I mean, a mini-bar, for goodness' sake — and satellite TV with wall-to-wall football.

We watched the Madrid derby live on Sky and by then it was almost time for *Match of the Day* and another chance to see Andy Cole's goal.

We returned to Old Trafford on Sunday for a ground tour with guide Rebecca Tow. The tour began in the press lounge, where everyone took turns to sit on Alex Ferguson's chair. "The players are all scared of Alex, but he's wonderfully

nice," confided Rebecca. Michael Barrett, aged eight, had travelled from Surrey with his parents, Peter and Jill, and his five-year-old sister, Sarah. Michael was having the time of his life. Wearing his Teddy Sheringham shirt, he posed for photos in the dressing rooms, in the dug-out, in the players' tunnel. He visibly brightened when Rebecca told him that United take on schoolboys as young as nine.

The statistics flowed: 180 executive boxes, with a ten-year waiting list, at £27,000 upwards a year; a ground capacity of 55,500 (which by

my reckoning meant there had been 426 empty seats the day before; just 79 arrests last season out of almost two million visitors.

In the stadium control room, 29 TV monitors showed close-circuit pictures, including pubs half a mile from the ground. "We can zoom in on fans close enough to read the time on their watches," said Rebecca.

She let us in on little secrets — such as the fact that no one is allowed alcohol before a game, but Eric Cantona, when he was with the club, could

have a glass of wine with his lunch "because he's French".

In the dressing rooms, she pointed out each player's hook, the massage couch where goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel relaxes before a game, and the warm-up room built to prevent Mark Hughes — who has now moved to Chelsea — from snatching all the lights.

Afterwards there was time to look around the museum, which traces the history of the club from its early days as Newton Heath (Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway) Cricket and Football Club — whose



England celebrates after qualifying for the World Cup

World Cup dampener

NOW that England and Scotland have qualified for the World Cup, football fans will be eager to buy tickets for the tournament, to be held in France next summer — but they may find them hard to come by.

There will be 500,000 tickets available for the 64 matches in the competition, which runs from June 10 to July 12. Prices range from £10 (£14.5) in the opening games to as much as £325 (£429.50) for the final.

But it looks increasingly likely that getting a ticket will be tough. Only 100,000 are being sold to non-French residents, and the Football Association expects to be allotted about 7,000 for each England game. And tickets will not be available until January.

To buy a ticket, supporters should either apply to the FA or contact one of five official European tour operators, who are likely to be appointed in December by the French World Cup Organising Committee.

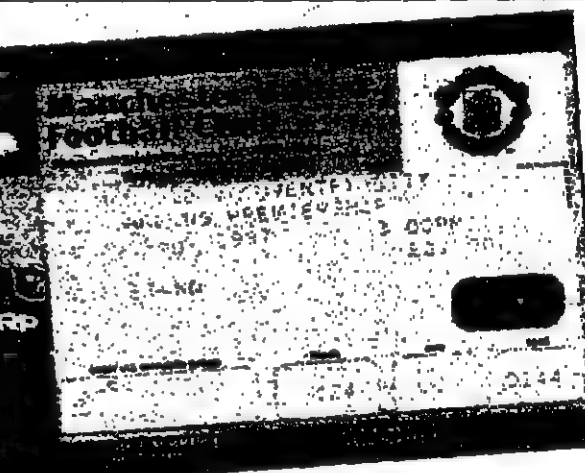
THE problem with approaching the FA is that priority is being given to fans signed up to the England Members' Club — expected to take the full ticket allocation.

Trying one of the operators is a better bet if you want to see an England match, although nobody is sure at this stage how many tickets they will hold — but it should not be a problem getting tickets for other nations' matches.

Some cunning fans with second homes in France are pretending to be French residents, who are already allowed to buy tickets — the Organising Committee is trying to clamp down on this. The draw for the World Cup will take place on December 4.

TOM CHESSHYRE

• Further information is available on the Internet — <http://www.france98.com>



Match day is a ticket to heaven

players had to change in a pub — to Manchester United plc, Premier League champions and European stars.

Exhibits include a stuffed goat (it used to be the team mascot, but died when the players fed it champagne to celebrate a Cup Final victory) and the ball with which George Best scored six goals against Northampton. But most poignant are the memories of the Busby Babes, perhaps United's greatest team, killed in the Munich air crash of 1958.

A measure of how much football has changed is that

when the Hungarian Ferenc Puskas offered to step in after the crash, he was turned down on the grounds that it would be impossible for a foreigner to integrate.

The cost of the weekend (£119 per person) seemed steep at first, given that each match ticket had a face value of just £21, but with touts logging tickets for up to £100, it begins to look more reasonable.

All of the people I spoke to thought so. "Michael's lifelong ambition has been to see United play at home," said Jill Barrett. "It was worth it just to see his face."



A tour of Old Trafford allows visitors to run through the players' tunnel just like their heroes

■ Tony Kelly travelled with Abbey Leisure (0171-222 3356), which has tickets for all of United's home games. A weekend package costs £119 per person, based on two sharing, and includes a match ticket, one night at the Ramada Hotel, a ground tour and the museum.

■ Tony Kelly travelled with Central Trains from Cambridge to Manchester. An Apex ticket, which must be booked at least seven days in advance, costs £28.50

FACT FILE

return. Virgin West Coast Line has a Super Apex return from London Euston to Manchester for £15 return, although numbers are limited and it must be booked 14 days in advance. Details from National Rail Enquiries (0345 484950).

■ The Red Café (0161-930 2930) is open

from noon-11pm daily. Most main courses cost about £7-£10. Bookings are essential on match days.

■ The Manchester United Museum and Tour Centre (0161-577 4002) is open from Tues-Sun, 9.30am-4pm, except match days, when it is open from 9.30am until half an hour before kick-off. Booking advised. Museum: adults £2.95, children £1.95, family £6.95. Museum and tour: adults £5.50, children £3.50, family £14.

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AWAY DAYS: THE TWICKENHAM EXPERIENCE



The stadium may be empty but tour guides are accomplished at keeping youngsters amused, and a run through the players' tunnel conjured up the magic of Twickenham for six-year-old Toby Symington.

SOCCER
FACT FILE

■ Tours of the stadium held Tuesday to Saturdays at 10.30am, 12 noon, 1.30pm and 3.00pm, and at 2pm and 2.30pm on Sundays, except two days before or after a match. Contact The Twickenham Experience on 0181-692 2040. It is best to ring and book, especially at weekends. The tour takes about an hour and a half. Allow the same for the museum.

■ The Museum of Rugby is open 10.30am-5.00pm Tuesday to Saturday (except match days, when it closes shortly before kick-off and reopens for an hour after the final whistle. Then it can be visited only by ticket holders). It is open 2-5pm on Sundays.

Combined charge for tour and museum: adults £4, children (under 16) £2.50, or £2.50 and £1.50 for museum only. Family ticket: £10 for two adults and three children. Under-16s are not admitted.

■ Twickenham railway station is about 10 minutes' walk from the stadium. There is ample free parking, except on match days. In the car park by entrance gate 11.

■ Snacks, meals and drinks (including alcohol) are served at the Invincibles Café. To book rugby-themed parties, call 0181-744 9595. There is a wide choice of places to eat in Twickenham itself. The most atmospheric rugby-themed pub is The White Swan, by the Thames.

■ The large TVI shop next door to Invincibles sells strips and souvenirs of national and club teams.

■ Another international stadium to visit is Murrayfield, in Edinburgh. Contact the Scottish Rugby Union on 0131-246 5000. Tours are at 10am, 11am, 1pm, 2pm and 3pm, every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, except Scottish public holidays and the week preceding international matches (this year November 22 and December 6). Charge: Adults £2, children under 18, £1. Booking is essential.

■ THE "WHERE DO I START?" SITE: <http://www.sky.co.uk/sports/manu/index.htm> is the Official Homepage of Manchester United — or go straight to David Beckham's site at <http://home3.wip.net/~w31477/>, which has been drooled over so far by more than 27,000 fans. <http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Field/2028/links.html> is the Red Devils' links page, sending you to dozens of MUFC websites from more than 40 countries. <http://www.lionsour.com/museum.htm> for a dull but informative page on the Twickenham Experience tour. Or you can try <http://snipe.ukc.ac.uk/law/spu/clubs.htm> where you will find a good list of English Rugby Links.

And why is that man crying?" asked my six-year-old son, admonishingly. But I knew the answer. Bankers about rugby since he was Toby's age, Fernando told me he played right-headed prop for a team in Buenos Aires as we waited for our "Twickenham Experience" tour. This was a pilgrimage to his spiritual home — the home of rugby, as he put it — and the main reason for his first visit to London.

His moment of truth came at the climax of the tour — a run through the players' tunnel on to the hallowed turf. There stood Fernando, in tones of barrel-chested Argentine lef, his glazed eyes gazing up between the upright posts, and tears coursing down his snubly cheeks.

"Because he can't quite believe he's here, Toby," I tried to explain. We had come to Twickenham for reasons rather shorter on raw emotion. Toby is just making his debut as a mini-rugby player in Bath, and I'm a dedicated fan. We would have a fun day out together. Male bonding between father and son, that sort of thing.

Our guide, John Hardy, a retired businessman, former club player and lifelong aficionado, was waiting at the main gates for our ten-strong group, which included a Japanese couple and a family of five from Dorset. He whisked us, by lift, high into the top of the

Tears for a field of dreams

The Twickenham Experience isn't just a great day out. It can even make real men cry, says Martin Symington

north stand, where we looked out across a rippling sea of 75,000 empty seats. "Just listen to the silence for a while, then imagine the roar as England scores against the All Blacks!" said Mr Hardy. He was accomplished at evoking the sense of stirring patriotism that has Twickenham crowds bawling out *God Save the Queen* and *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*.

Mr Hardy was also skilled at keeping the youngsters amused. For example, when we reached the royal box in the west stand, he invited an amused and delighted Toby to park his posterior on the very leather where Her Majesty does the same on her occasional visits. For the unworldly, he was able to call on a vast array of facts and statistics, both about the stadium and the history of the game. I was interested in the commentary box and how the television coverage operates, having watched and listened to Nigel Stanger-Smith, Bill McLaren and their studio guests over the years.

Next, we were swept through the swish President's Suite and fusty RFU Committee (aka Will Carling's notorious "old fart" Room). Then it was down to the medical suite and dope-testing centre and into the ultimate inner sanctum — the tradition and superstition-soaked England players' dressing room.

"The front row always use these three pegs," said Mr Hardy, his voice dropping in hushed reverence. We were equally awestruck when we were shown the giant, 60-year-old iron baths. He told us: "Twenty minutes before kick-off, everybody leaves the room except the players. The captain then addresses them."

The build-up for the fantasy run through the players' tunnel was now complete. Out we went into the roaring, capacity-crowded stadium for the uplifting national anthems and the blood and thunder of international confrontation. Poor old Fernando. It was all a bit too much for him.

Toby and I had lunch in the Invincibles Café (so called

after the unbeaten 1924 All Blacks side), where spinach quiche was on the menu. I know these are the caring Nineties, but doesn't the Real Man have any last bastion?

We rounded off the day in the Museum of Rugby, which is under the east stand. For me, this was the biggest surprise of the day. I had expected an explanation of rugby's historical roots, and perhaps some interesting bits of memorabilia such as the Calcutta Cup and Five Nations trophy.

to detain us for half an hour. Instead, we found a sophisticated, ultra-modern museum that kept us enthralled for three times as long.

High-tech visuals and acoustics brilliantly recreated the atmosphere of Twickenham on match days as we went through a muck-up turnstile into a cauldron of life-size model players in action, surrounded by singing, shouting, moving crowds projected

onto the walls. The "medical suite" and "dressing room" were even more authentic, with gory bits of blood-stained bandage, mud, boots and dirty kit on the floor, while the whiff of liniment hung in the air. Toby thought these were much more exciting than the actual rooms we had visited earlier.

He soon learned up with a couple of other young lads and, pitched into the scrum machine. Meanwhile, I had discovered the banks of interactive, touch-screen computers. You

can call up any team or era you like and watch choice pieces of action, complete with original commentary, played through headphones. "This is brilliant," said Toby, as soon as he had got the hang of this game. It was.

I had definitely earned my spurs as a dad and the two of us left, having had a great day out together.

I am not sure, though, whether we would have come all the way from South America for the experience.

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■ TRAVELLERS' TALES SITE: Look at excerpts from, or order, 'The World Wide Web of United', a book of 200 articles written by world-wide United fans at <http://www.trafford.com/>

robots/97-0014.html. <http://www.merv.com/manud/manubook.html> is a guest-book with fiery comments by both fans and enemies of Man U. <http://www.dcu.ie/~demon.co.uk/poincast/news1.html> contains the latest gossip.

<http://www.sportszineuk.co.uk> is one of UK sport's best e-zines, especially for rugby (visit the bar and special rugby site of the month), while <http://jj.payne.co.uk/rugbynet/> is a well-laid out site.

■ THE MUGGING-UP SITE: browse through the 60 or so titles on offer by typing "Manchester United" at the search prompt at <http://www.bookpages.co.uk>. The South African-orientated site at <http://rugby.ru.ac.za/DATA-trivia/Overview.html> has trivia including a translation of the haka, while at the <http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Field/5855/INDEX.htm> you can visit the Unofficial English Rugby Site for links, news and club contacts.

■ "WELL, I NEVER!" — THE RANDOM SITE: "Serve in a brothel, you couldn't score in a brothel!" and other lyrics are found at the comprehensive <http://www.personal.u-net.com/pitman/songbook.htm> site.

■ THE TRAVEL BOOK-SHOP: Last week we printed an incorrect Web address. It should be <http://www.the-travelbookshop.co.uk>

SUSANNAH JOWITT

SKI WEEKEND: ITALY

High drama following a snow fall

LUNCH is a way of life in Italy and laughter flows as freely as the vino rosso as we sit and admire the magnificent, sunny views of the Monte Rosa massif — in the Alps, only Mont Blanc is higher. Behind us, pastel paint peels off the plastered walls of the oldest mountain inn (1870) in Europe, and second to none for hospitality. Alas, not even the Rifugio Guglielmiana's buttered far-falle can still the butterflies in my stomach. Two glasses of fiery grappa are required before I can review the past few days of skiing above Alagna with equanimity.



DOUG SAGER

The morning had been spent dancing at the end of a rope, waiting my turn to rappel down the Malfatta Couloir. Steep and narrow as a lift shaft, the Malfatta is normally negotiable without mountaineering gear, but recent avalanches and snowboarders had turned it into a minefield of slabs and rubble.

Sliding hand over hand down the rope into the shadowy hole, my muscles were tied in knots by vivid flashbacks to how futilely I had hauled on a rope the day before in the Calle Perduta. Having followed our guide safely through leg-wrenching, breakable crust and down a 40-degree pitch, we swooped out fast and sure on to a relatively flat and open plain.

I sensed that something was wrong but didn't know what. Even when I saw the small hole ahead, I thought it was only one of those minor fissures that you often ski right over in glaciated areas such as the Vallée Blanche. But where was my skiing companion? In the worst of freak accidents, he had stopped on the snow bridge covering

a shoulder-wide crevasse — and fallen through it.

Suddenly every patch of snow was suspect. As a guide and another skier sped off for help, I and a female companion lowered a rope. We hauled hard, but the rope merely cut through the snow. In the end, it took five men, one hanging upside down from a steel tripod with a pneumatic drill, to chisel the victim out 25 metres below, where he was encased in ice up to his chest.

Italy is often criticised for its inefficient infrastructure, and it's true that transport, communications and toilets are not always up to Swiss or even French standards. But the Monte Rosa rescue helicopter could not have been quicker or better equipped. And our Italian mountain guide's insurance covered all rescue and medical costs.

Skiing in Italy has boomed in recent years. For the two biggest operators — Crystal and First Choice — Italy is their second largest programme, with Crystal featuring 26 resorts, more than any other operator. Italy's attractions remain mostly easy skiing on sunny slopes, good government-subsidised lift networks and great food and drink at reasonable prices.

But for more affluent and ambitious skiers, the Italian allure is fading like a bad paint job. North America offers better service, and Switzerland is, for many, affordable for the first time. I lived in the Italian Dolomites for two years and have found nowhere else so delightful to ski. I would be living there now were the seasons not so short. The snow begins to get slushy in February, and there is little skiing above 3,000 metres.



The Italian Dolomites, the most stunning peaks to ski and the world's largest skiing region, although the season is short

AOSTA VALLEY

Here are the Italian alternatives to Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn. Courmayeur and Cervinia are packed all winter, largely with Britons, and with good reason: they are cheaper, sunnier and have better snow than Chamonix or Zermatt. Courmayeur suits intermediates, especially those who like long coffee and lunch breaks. Intermediates can ski the Vallée Blanche from the Courmayeur side without fear of the Chamonix ice steps. The town has the friendliest, most comfortable bars in the Alps, as well as fashionable shopping. For expert skiers, Courmayeur has ample powderfields on the Toulia glacier and the incomparable Marbrée desert, prone to avalanche and to be attempted with a local guide. Helicopter skiing on the nearby Rutor glacier with highly capable Courmayeur guides is tremendous value. Cervinia has little charm but great cheer. Its slopes always have more snow than

RESORTS

Zermatt, but, despite some very long pistes, the skiing is irredeemably intermediate — excellent news for ambitious beginners, who will find most runs marked red (intermediate) dead easy. Zermatt is now included on a six-day skipass, but the lifts up from Cervinia suffer from weather stoppages. Getting down to Zermatt and back to Cervinia needs careful planning. Cervinia is not a chalet resort: its hotels are serviceable rather than sumptuous. Crystal (0181-399 5144) has the widest choice. Courmayeur has much better hotels, and chalets. Inghams (0181-780 4444) has long had the best choice.

MONTE ROSA

Some of the best snow-sure, uncrowded skiing in Italy is tucked away here on the second highest massif in the Alps, in several small resorts of tremendous value. Cham-

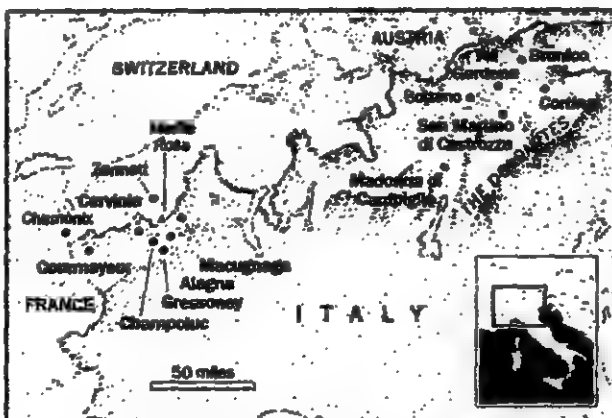
poluc, Gressoney, Alagna and Macugnaga are just the other side of the Swiss border from Zermatt and Saas Fee. The first three resorts are on the Monterosa skipass, though access to and from Alagna will test even experienced experts. Macugnaga has limited skiing, all very easy, but is charming and, above all, cheap. For the four years that I have been checking skipass prices for 100 resorts, Macugnaga has always been the least expensive. Helicopter skiing in the Monte Rosa resorts is a bargain, especially compared with the nearby Swiss alternative with Air Zermatt. Alagna is becoming a magnet for ski and snowboard video producers, but the town has great character and good restaurants, if very limited accommodation. Gressoney has an excellent snow record and a reasonable range of easy pistes, crowded at times. The high mountain refuges between Gressoney and Alagna have a rustic cuisine and atmosphere not found in more developed resorts.

Crystal (0181-399 5144) pioneered Gressoney and is the first firm to offer Alagna as a destination resort. First Choice (0990 55755) has good family hotels in Macugnaga. The only firm to offer advanced off-piste and helicopter skiing options with qualified local guides, from Alagna, is Ski Weekend (01367 241636).

THE DOLOMITES

This is the world's largest skiing region, nearly double the size of France's Trois Vallées. The Dolomites are also the most stunningly scenic of peaks to ski. On the Dolomiti Superski pass there are 464 ski lifts and almost 1,200km of pistes. The area ranges across northern Italy from Bolzano to Cortina, in 12 sectors — far too big to link together by ski pistes. Sectors, such as those of Val Gardena and Alta Badia, circumnavigated by the popular intermediate "ski safari" known as the Sella Ronda, have their own regional skipasses.

The Dolomites have seen massive investment in snow-making and lift construction, including half a dozen significant upgrades this season. Snowmaking covers 50 per cent of all pistes. Val Gardena, dominated by the looming Sassolungo, is breathtakingly beautiful but expensive. Lesser known areas, such as the Plan de Corones, centred around the medieval town of



Brunico or San Martino di Castrozza, offer inexpensive and expansive skiing for intermediates. Most villages have both Italian and German names — most of the visitors are German.

Equity Total Ski (01273 298288) is a family-orientated firm with all-inclusive prices in 15 Italian resorts, many in the Dolomites. Thomson (0990 329329) adds Val Gardena for the first time, with some ski-to-the-door properties.

CLASS APART

It is price, or lack of it, that brings most Britons to Italy. Italians have another view. They like to spend lavishly on holiday, and to be seen doing it. But they do appreciate class, and Cortina d'Ampezzo has more of that than Aspen, Zermatt and St Moritz together. The 1950s atmosphere — Cortina hosted the Winter Olympics in 1956 — lends the resort an unhurried grace. Rose tints off dolomitic rock colour the most stunning alpine views on this planet. Few people bother to go skiing before 10am. But there is very challenging skiing in the region's unique funnel couloirs. And where else will chalets wander to within a few metres of a ski trail?

Madonna di Campiglio is officially Italy's number one resort, rated even higher than

Cortina: wide and well-groomed slopes, absence of queues and the fanfare of international events. Moon boots are still worn in Madonna, which is sometimes said to have no nightlife. But perhaps that is because most British observers have gone to bed before it begins, or maybe because they can't handle Italy's most famous mountain nightspot, Zangola, which features male strippers, dancing girls and the mother of all techno.

Momentum Travel (0171-371 9111) is an upmarket specialist with detailed knowledge of the best properties in Cortina and Madonna. Ski Equipe (0161-440 0010) has one of the only chalets available in Cortina. Powder Byre (0181-871 3300) features some of Cortina's best hotels. Thomson (0990 329329) has several hotels in Madonna and in nearby Folgarida.

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THE LATEST FROM THE SLOPES

Early falls: There have been snowfalls down to 1,300m across the Alps this week. More importantly, sub-zero temperatures allow snow-making to begin, meaning that many resorts now hope to open early next month.

Calling time on the brochures: Skiers relying on timetables printed in the First Choice, Inghams and Thomson brochures will be waiting around for more than an hour on the platform at Waterloo station for Eurostar's new Saturday morning ski train to Mothers and Bour St Maurice in France.

These three brochures all quote a 7.53am departure. Eurostar says the train will not leave until 8.57am. That is three minutes too early for readers of Crystal's brochure, according to which the

No crowds Monte Rosa

train does not pull out until 9am. Neither Nelson nor Airtours, the other two mainstream ski tour operators, offers this Saturday service.

Resorts too far: Inghams has abandoned all its new resorts in Italy, Austria and Norway. Crystal has already cut all three of its new resorts

in the French Pyrenees for this season, but has added another, new resort: Storlien in Sweden. In the third edition of its brochure, Neilson has dropped Pamporovo in Bulgaria and Crested Butte in America, but added New Hampshire. Airtours has given up on Les Arcs in France, plus Aspen and Steamboat in America.

Kudos for Crystal: Britain's biggest skiing holiday company is big enough to admit it got it wrong. Forthcoming editions of Crystal's ski brochure radically revise the entry for Alagna, Italy — taking note of my observations, made on these pages two weeks ago, that Crystal had overrated the resort for intermediates. Skiers will be warned that Alagna has no pistes routes to or from the intermediate skiing in Gressoney.

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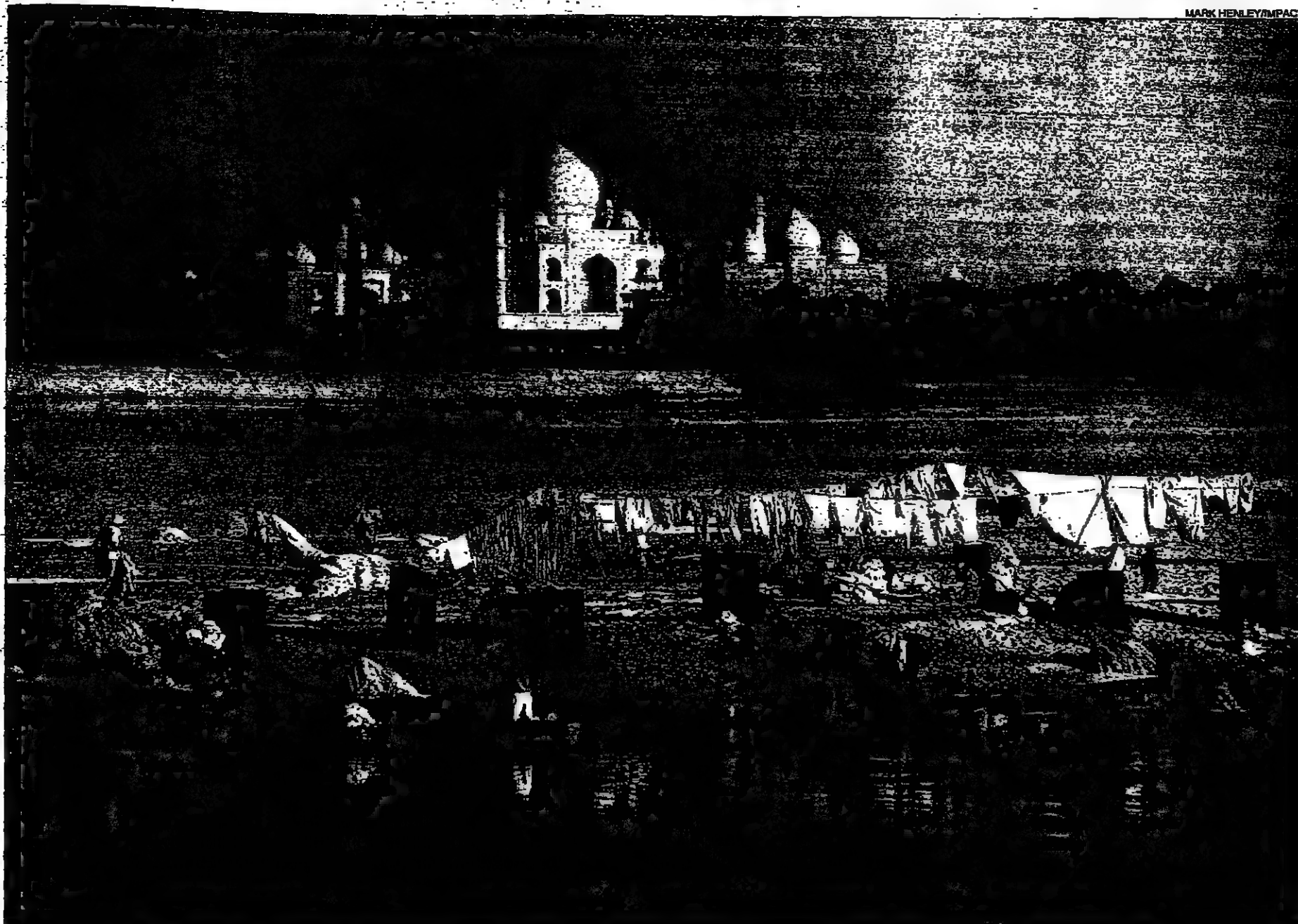
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One of the world's great wonders is now more accessible, reports Tom Chesshyre



Following airport runway repairs, visitors can fly to Agra direct, instead of facing an arduous coach trip from Delhi to the Taj Mahal

Smoother path to Taj Mahal

Tourists flying to India on package trips will no longer have to face an exhausting three-hour coach journey from Delhi to the Taj Mahal after flying from Britain.

This month long-awaited repairs to the runway at Agra airport have been completed and the first regular flights are arriving from Britain.

The Taj Mahal is India's most spectacular tourist attraction and is usually the first stop on north Indian itineraries. Monarch Airlines now has a weekly service to Agra — a 757

carrying 235 people — from Gatwick, departing on Tuesdays, until April 28.

Two tour operators, Kuoni and Voyages Jules Verne, have chartered aircraft and have put together holiday packages based on Agra. Other airlines and operators are expected to follow suit.

"It's a fantastic improvement," said a spokeswoman for Kuoni. "The Taj Mahal is such a huge tourist destination, and it was crazy that tourists couldn't fly there direct before now."

In the past, most tourists visiting Agra

would usually see the Taj Mahal and then move on to other tourist attractions. But tour operators are now offering itineraries that include several nights in the city, one of the most bustling in India.

Kuoni's tours of Agra — starting at £545 for a week's B&B — include trips to the Taj Mahal as well as Agra's Red Fort, a huge 16th-century military base surrounded by a moat. Most packages have optional trips to Delhi and Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan.

Before the repair work began at Agra airport, there were a few direct flights from

Britain each year. However, the Government of India Tourist Board believes that the airport's new role is a turning point for tourism in the region.

"It is a great thing that people no longer have to fly to Delhi to get to the Taj Mahal," said a spokesman.

"The 125-mile journey by coach could be very tiresome, especially for elderly travellers. We feel that people will now be better able to discover the beautiful city of Agra. It is not just a place to stop off for the Taj Mahal. There are many other attractions in the area."

Bombs hit Sri Lanka recovery

Island's image takes a dent after rebel attack. Report by Steve Keenan

THE Sri Lanka bombings that killed 18 people this week threaten to wreck hopes of a tourism recovery for the island this winter.

The bombs, which destroyed the ballroom of the luxury Galadhar Hotel and parts of the nearby Hilton in the capital, Colombo, marked a new drive by terrorists to disrupt Sri Lanka's tourist industry. And they exploded just two weeks before charter flights from the UK begin their winter season.

Ranjit de Silva, director of the UK office of the Sri Lankan Tourist Board, said he had hoped this year for a return to 1995 tourism figures, when a record 63,582 UK visitors flew to Sri Lanka.

The numbers fell last year to 52,095 following a suicide bomb attack in January 1996 on the Central Bank in Colombo, in which 81 people were killed and 1,500 injured.

But following a lull in terrorist incidents in popular resort areas, the number of UK visitors in the first seven months of 1997 had grown by 10.7 per cent.

Rohan Christopher, executive director of Toureast, a ground handler for holiday firms including Kuoni, Trailfinders, Asia World Travel and Thomas Cook Holidays, said: "The bomb comes at a bad time for us."

"Tourism was picking up at a good pace. We expected numbers to rise a quarter this year, with a record number coming from Britain. For us, it is one step forward and ten steps back."

After the 1996 Colombo bomb we saw a 25 per cent drop in numbers. We were recovering from that. Army security is very tight in Colombo, but you can't check every single human being. We could lose bookings next week to Kenya, Thailand or South America."

An estimated 1,000 British tourists were in Sri Lanka when the bombs went off. But most were in resort areas such as Negombo and Kalutara, or on round-island tours.



A Colombo car park in ruins

British Airways Holidays moved four customers out of a city centre hotel on Wednesday to one at the airport 20 miles away. Customers already booked to travel to Sri Lanka are being offered alternatives.

Thomson Holidays had 200 customers in Sri Lanka this week but said none was in Colombo. Customers booked to travel are being told to contact their travel agent or Thomson.

THOMSON expected to carry 7,000 Britons to Sri Lanka in the charter flight season from November to April. The first charter is due to leave on November 4. But neither Thomson nor BAH would immediately say whether they will offer refunds. "We will judge each case on its merits," said Thomson.

The bombings were the first time that suspected terrorists from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have targeted hotels. But there have also been five attacks since June on the country's most popular wildlife sanctuary, Yala National Park, in the southeast of the island.

Whale-watching in South Africa is one of the week's best last-minute holiday deals, says Joanna Hunter

PACK YOUR BAGS



October is the best month to watch whales in South Africa. Art of Travel (0171-738 2038) offers a trip staying at Groothoed Lodge on the Groothoed Nature Reserve, which has spectacular views of the Cape of Good Hope. Six nights half-board, car hire, and return flights from Heathrow to Cape Town on Tuesday (October 21) or Thursday (October 23) cost from £1,386 per person.

Arts and crafts fans will be in their element at the Made in the Hills arts event in East Devon next weekend. The Blackdown Hills Arts Week-end promises free workshops, exhibitions, craft demonstrations and studio visits. The Sea Hill Hotel (01404 881881), near Axminster, is offering B&B from £38 per person, information about the week-end and alternative accommodation is available from Fiverton Tourist Information Centre (01884 258827).

Corfu à la Carte (01635 201140) is offering a special low season price at the Villa Caribia on the north-east coast of Corfu. Return flights departing from Gatwick or Manchester on Monday (October 20), transfers and seven nights self-catering accommodation cost £289 per person, based on four sharing.

Live it to the full in Ibiza. The Holiday Centre (0181-440 1131) has availability at the Luxmar apartments in Figueretas. Seven nights self-

Route	Promotional Fare	Flexible Fare
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London-Glasgow	from £58 Ryanair (ex-Luton)	£198 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
London-Lisbon	£33 Airway/£12 one-way BA (ex-Heathrow)	£298 BA (ex-Gatwick)
London-New York	from £199 one-way/£225 two-way BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)	£844 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
London-Rome	from £78 Economy (ex-Luton)	£478 BA (ex-Heathrow)
London-Paris	£33 one-way/£66 two-way BA (ex-Heathrow)	£218 BA (ex-Heathrow)
Manchester-Rome	£49 one-way/£119 two-way BA (ex-Heathrow)	£210 BA
London-Zurich	£89/£119 BA (ex-Heathrow)	£284 BA (ex-Heathrow)

catering, which is based on four people sharing, and return flights from Gatwick but not transfers, cost £199 per person. Departures on Wednesday (October 22).

Reid's Palace in Madeira (0171-805 5059) is offering half-term help. One child under 12 can share their parents' room for no extra

Hurricane takes its toll in Acapulco

ACAPULCO airport reopened this week following the hurricane that killed hundreds in the Mexican resort. Most of the city's hotels escaped the worst of Hurricane Pauline, which left the city covered in mud and debris.

Water supplies to hotels are being given priority, and the city's beaches are also largely unscathed.

But with estimates of 400 deaths and 20,000 homeless in the poorer areas of Acapulco, few tourists are expected to visit the resort during the coming months.

Communications are difficult, and all roads to Acapulco are closed except the one to Mexico City. The palm-lined Costera Miguel Aleman Avenue that skirts the bay is also littered with debris.

A decade ago, there were regular charter flights from the UK to Acapulco, but the resort has since fallen out of favour. Now only a handful of operators features the city as a side option on a Mexican tour, says Steve Collins of Journey Latin America.

"Acapulco saw its days in the Seventies, but when Cancun was built in the east, most people started going there," he said.

JLA had only one client due to visit Acapulco last week, while British Airways Holidays had three. In Mexico, large operators such as Thomson Holidays now only feature Cancun and other Pacific resorts 450 miles from Acapulco.

STEVE KEENAN

Eurostar has the French Alps in sight

SKIERS heading for the French Alps this winter will be able to take Eurostar trains for the first time.

From December 13 to April 25, Eurostar will run high-speed trains from Waterloo and Ashford in Kent to the heart of the main French ski resorts.

The trains stop at Moutiers (near the resorts of Val Thorens, Méribel, Courcheval, Les Menuires and La Plagne) and Bourg-St Maurice (near Tignes, Val d'Isère and Les Arcs). The journeys take

approximately eight hours and cost from £129 return. Buses from the stop-off points to the resorts cost from £5 and take about 30-40 minutes. There are no charges for carrying skis.

Flights from London to either Geneva (1hr 30m, from £129 with British Airways) or Lyons (1hr 35m, from £109) may be quicker than Eurostar, but transfers from the airports to the resorts take three to four hours. Most scheduled airlines do not charge extra for carrying skis.

however, charter flights normally charge about £12. A spokeswoman for the Ski Club of Great Britain welcomed the new services. "With flying you've also got to add the time it takes to get to check-in and to leave your car, if you have one, at an airport car park."

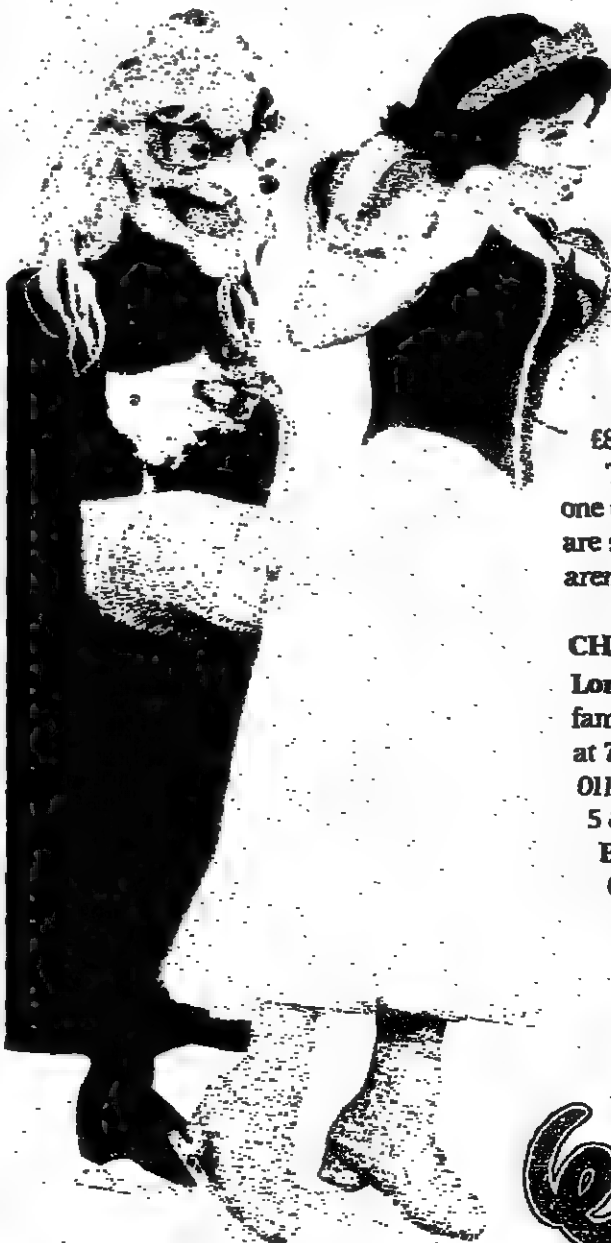
Driving to these resorts — probably the cheapest option — takes 12 to 14 hours from London, depending on the traffic.

TOM CHESHYRE

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THE TIMES

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Birmingham National Indoor Arena, box office:

0121 200 2222; family-ticket performances:

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Newcastle Newcastle Arena, box office: 0191 401

8000; family-ticket performances: November 26

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NARROWBOATS on the wide network of British canals offer a snug and unusual Christmas break. Though modern boats may look like their cargo-carrying counterparts from their 19th-century heyday, the barges would not recognise the central heating, fully equipped kitchens, hot showers, duvets and, in some cases, colour television, microwave and fridge-freezers.

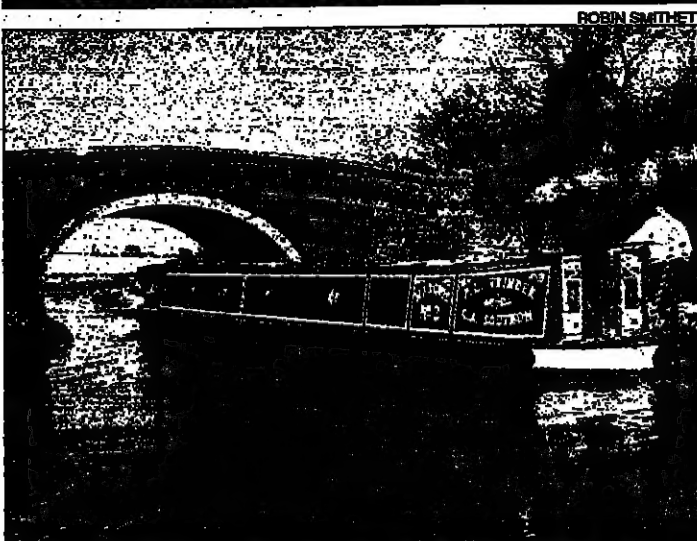
Anglo-Welsh Waterways Holidays (0117 924 1200) offers 100 or so boats, sleeping four to six people, for about £720 for a week, or £380 for a three or four-day break. Prices include fuel, gas, linen, car parking at the boatyard and a Christmas hamper. If you intend to be the skipper, take your thermals - narrowboats are steered from outside.

ON THE Rent-a-Hosted programme organised by the YHA (01722 337494), friends and families can take over an entire youth hostel, coming and going as they please. Many of the hostels are historic buildings in attractive locations, including a former watermill, the Cockermouth Youth Hostel, which can accommodate 28. A four-night break there over Christmas costs £575 per group. Further south, Telcelmole Youth Hotel near Lewes, East Sussex, can sleep 20 in three 200-year-old cottages two miles from the sea, for £590 for four nights. Perranporth Youth Hostel in north Cornwall has guaranteed sea views - it is a former coastguard station on a cliff and costs £515 for up to 28 people for four nights.

Orkney delight

ARCHAEOLOGY, sporting wildlife and enjoying traditional hospitality is the aim of the eight-day Christmas in Orkney and the Highlands Tour from Naturetrek (01962 733051), leaving on December 20. The three-centre holiday features the Spey Valley and Caithness as well as Orkney, where you spend Christmas at the four-crown Ayre Hotel in Kirkwall. Wildlife highlights may include red deer, otters and common grey seals, with birds galore from black gullmots to hen harriers, possibly even little auks in Scapa Flow.

JILL CRAWSHAW'S CHRISTMAS IN BRITAIN



Modern narrowboats even have central heating and showers

George Mackay Brown, the late Orkney poet, wrote about the interior of Maes Howe: "One of the light rays is caught in this stone web of death... I never cease to wonder at the way primitive man arranged, in hewn stone, such powerful symbolism." Naturetrek's tour visits the ancient burial site when the setting sun shines directly down its long tunnel. The tour, departing from Aviemore or Inverness, costs £595 for full board and visits.

No time for that pudding feeling

WORK OFF some of those extra Christmas calories by taking part in the action-packed breaks organised by Acorn Activities (01432 830083) at Llangollen, on the banks of the River Dee, from December 24-27. For £375, you get three days of mountain-biking, walking, abseiling, white-water rafting and indoor go-karting, with a Christmas meal, pub lunch and disco dancing squeezed in between. Full-board accommodation at the Royal Hotel in Llangollen is included, and there are no single supplements.

Less breathless three-night breaks for bridge and walking enthusiasts cost from £200 each for full-board and activities at the Pencerri Gardens Hotel, near Builth Wells on the Welsh border.

Baronial life

A PERSONAL piper in Balenund Castle in Perthshire and chaffeur-driven tours can be organised by Blandings (01223 293444). The company specialises in castles, mansions and "exquisite smaller houses". Fishing, deer stalking and grouse shooting can also be arranged. Baronial Balenund stands on the lower Grampian slopes overlooking Pitlochry in its own 15 acres of pasture and woodland - with Glamis Castle, Balmoral, Mearns Castle, Scone Palace and Blair's Castle within easy reach. Playing laird of the manor does not come cheap. Christmas week costs £3,150, but this can be shared by the 16 guests the castle can accommodate.

At a more modest £1,850 a week for up to ten people, Carreg Felen is a 14th-century Welsh manor house on the edge of Snowdonia, with newer bits added by the architect Clough Williams-Ellis, whose experimental Italianate village, Portmeirion, is only three miles away.

USEFUL winter tasks for the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (01491 839766) include protecting woodlands on the North Yorkshire moors, hedge-laying in Cheshire and creating a cycle path in Staffordshire. Accommodation varies from village halls to country cottages. The cost ranges from £45-£85 for a week, which includes food and lodging, but not travel.

Rent-a-folly

LANDMARK TRUST, the charity that rescues historic buildings and lets them out for self-catering holidays, has some eccentric hideaways for rent during the week starting December 22.

Luttrell's Tower is a Georgian folly looking towards Cowes from the Solent at Eglehurst, Hampshire. It was built for Temple Luttrell, an MP (though better known locally as a smuggler), later used by Marconi for his wireless experiments of 1912. Christmas week at the Tower, which sleeps up to four, costs £1,236.

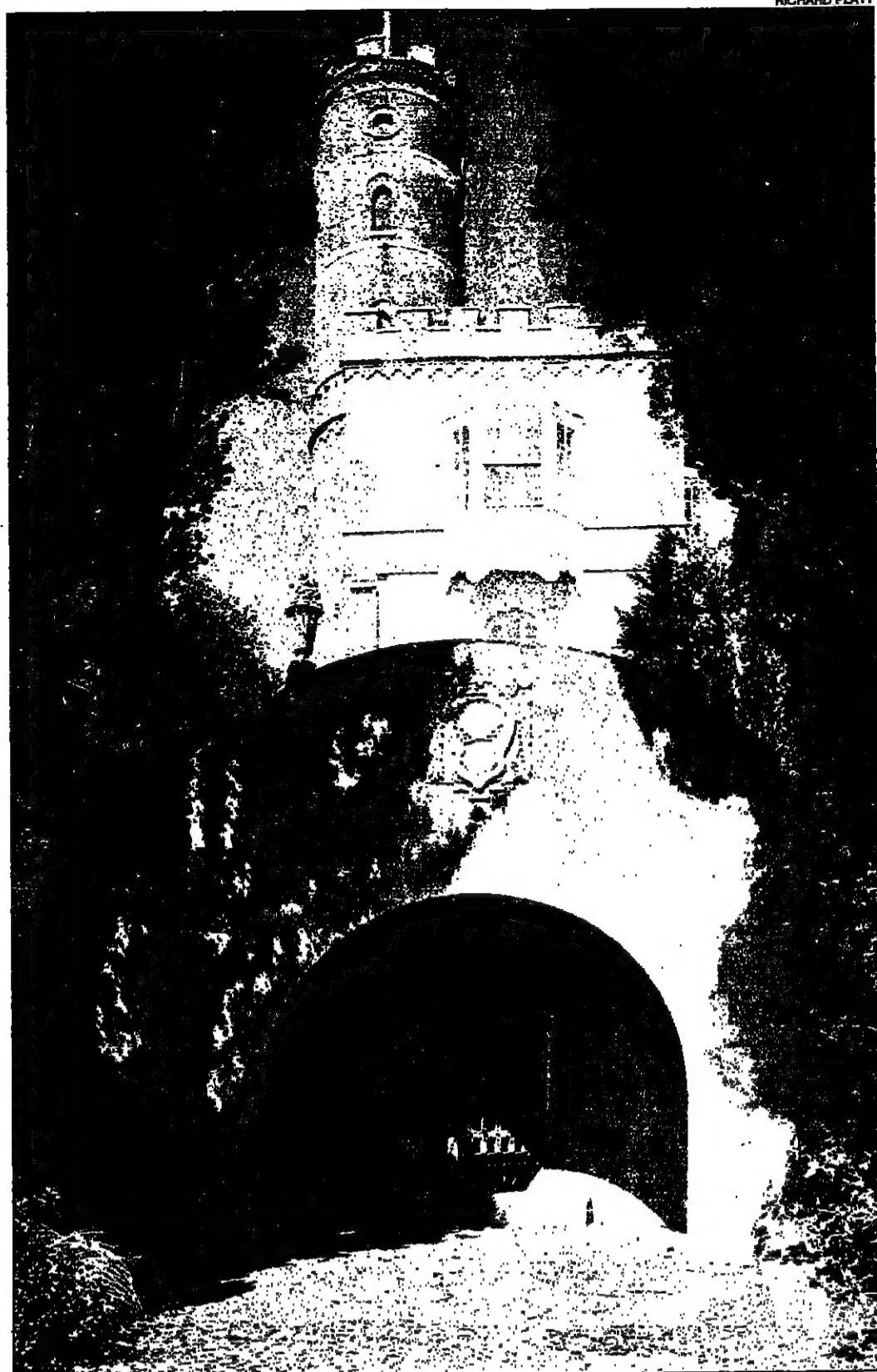
Funds from coal built the 18th-century Banqueting House at Gilsede, near Newcastle upon Tyne. It stands high above the Derwent Valley and now, restored by the Trust, four people can spend Christmas there for £665. Full details in the *Landmark Handbook*, £8.50 (including p&p) refundable against bookings. Contact the Trust at Shutesbrook, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 3SW (01628 825923).

Rural retreats

FOR those wanting a rural bolthole, Norfolk Country Cottages (01603 871872) has traditional flint and painted cottages within reach of Burnham Market and Blakeney, Wells-next-the-Sea, Cromer, and half-a-dozen nature reserves, churches and stately homes including Sandringham. There will not be many people around - but you can expect a few thousand wild geese which will have flown south from Spitzbergen for Christmas. The cost of a cottage sleeping four to nine people is £160 to £500 per week.

For wilder scenery, craggy castles, coastal walks and fishing ports, Northumbria Coast and Country Cottages (01665 830783) offers slate and stone cottages in and around Bamburgh, Craster, Dunstan and on Holy Island, which is cut off at high tide. Prices range from about £200 for cottages for two people to £800 for country houses sleeping 12.

Check with all properties whether fuel and linen are included in the price. All the firms report heavy bookings over Christmas and New Year. If you are a last-minute person, try the larger agencies: Country Holidays (01282 445095); English Country Cottages (01328 351155); Welsh Country Cottages (01328 851341); Country Cottages in Scotland (01328 864011); Little Acorns Country Cottages (Kent) 01233 820706.



Eccentrically yours: Luttrell's Tower, a Georgian folly, looks towards Cowes from the Solent

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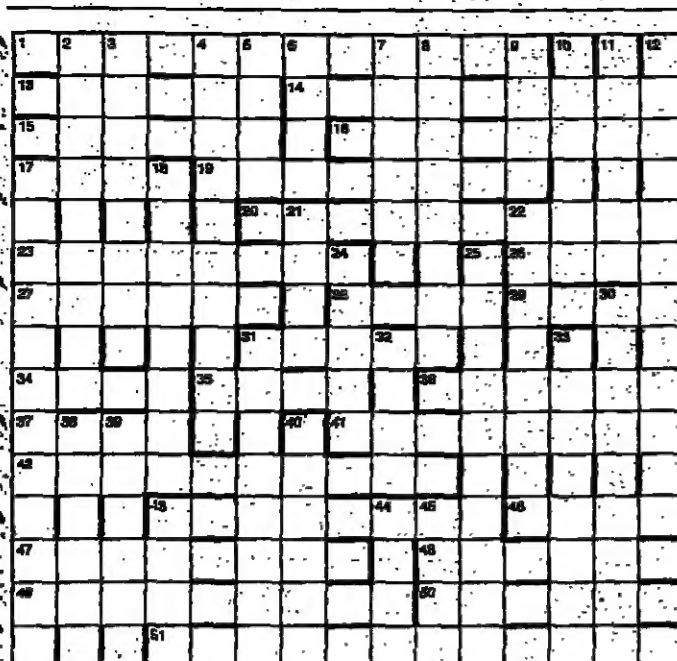
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THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No 3432: Alibi II by Fenrix



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Each clue contains an extraneous word (of two or more syllables), the deletion of which leaves a normal clue to the light. Of this, only the first letter is entered at the number, the remainder at a space which will precisely accommodate it. To provide some guidance, the initial letter of the extraneous word is entered in the fourth space at the number.

Thus "Spout master's broken cape" at a six-letter space could give "ACNE", entered as A--M--. The CNE being reserved for a four-letter space.

- ACROSS**
- Of what surrounds viscera, permit tripe alone to be cooked (10)
 - Fish-carrier transports fish (That's deep) (4)
 - Dancer provides a touch of magic during heathen festival (4)
 - Remove everything leaders of unions deem unsuitable in depression (6)
 - Once you record concerts, cry out (4)
 - Urchin stills or becomes one suffering (8)
 - Bumble (7) bee circles lazily languidly wandering (6)
 - Child returns, clutching a fevered temple (4)
 - Strange edit — one that concerns once optimistic spirit (10)
 - Very persistent person bags a plannigan (4)
 - His dutiful "heavy" wrecked school (8)
 - Not in favour of exorcising a spirit (4)
 - Willing to edit play (4)
 - Just like the Welsh — and Irish to boot — almost invariably getting badly let in (6)
 - Complex nuclear reorganisation certainly cuts rainy northern sides in dramatic fashion (12)
 - Old black volume, a handy educational vehicle with leaves half interfolded (8)
 - In cathedral cities (some say), starting to "cup" superior mincingly sets incomes apart (7)
 - E.g. Irving Berlin's remarkably solitary eminence (9)
 - Draw together and drink a drop of mead in the country (9)
 - It's staggering to consider an assembly of military forces (4)
 - Musby peas — divine legumes! (4)
 - Fishes seat abandoned after extra time (5)
 - From the sound of it, I'm weary here, duck (4)
 - A hazy cut or hacked into wild barley where leaves join stem (12, two words)

- 49 Re-entrant turns criticize theatre and get ready to go (6)
50 That leg-spinner is Reeve's mate — the unity one (6)
51 Chamber musician staring mad after cipher (8)

- DOWN**
- Venetian glass in deceptive, not evidently Italic (9)
 - Spuriously to put "heroic" in with the Spanish for "love" was to raise a question in the debate (12)
 - Burning widows was not quite barbarous enough for Nero (4)
 - French ready to imprison enemy supreme in district (8)
 - Managed to capture blow-pipe, and, I see, container of this acid (8)
 - Coin upvalued 50 per cent precisely — up 100 quinary (6)
 - Variety of domestic nutmeg tree (6)
 - Theatre set scenery for repeat performance (6)
 - In the manner of a dutiful son, said: "Girl friend? Unimaginable" (8)
 - Henry's involved in korfbal game; he brooked no opposition to his progress (4)
 - Conservative element missing in over-fussy gable decoration (6)
 - In advanced mine Chinese start to excavate yuan-earning mineral, its composition hard to discern (8)
 - With one drawing room undecorated at first, crumpled's disfigured centre of hall (10)
 - Do one's neighbour's clamour at the Globe? (4)
 - Adviser of the people left associate in charge (4)
 - Shoes too small for Clementine and Ernest — his get tight (6)
 - Chambers indicates "o'erleaps" (6)
 - Sailing vessel approaching concealed landing-stage (4)
 - Having walked round bottom of tail, spaniel misses small article (12)
 - Mac's keen on archaeology: here, with a bit of luck, he might find coins (5)
 - Los Angeles area doctor cycles to celebrate independence (8)
 - Poets make undue claims when Muse is refractory (6)
 - Mexican griddle cake — it's up to a hombre to consume a bit (8)
 - Trials of a vice-roy! His Excellency's caught with prima donna in Kuala Lumpur (8)
 - Render unconscious outlaws mad to return (4)
 - These sillies reacted with zinc to form German Permian layer (9)
 - Perhaps long sermon on breaking of diet rule (10)

Solution and notes for No 3429 Phone Phreaks by BeCo

Theme — phonetics. Solutions were to be entered in lower case, with stress marks and accents (as shown in the Chambers Dictionary, 1993) included for adjusted entries to six-letter answers (10a queued, 16a mishit, 17a missed, 19a graine, 20a indene, 22a taught, 42a thought, 44a sided, 5d wheugh, 7d inream, 9d witold, 15d scrawl, 25d strong, 26d torret, 34d stripe, 37d drutch).

"g bernard shaw" (bottom left to top right diagonal, derived from the first letters of Chambers's pronunciation of the redundant words in across clues, i.e. "jör horn rd fñr"), proposed the phonetic equivalence of "ghoi" and "fish" from the pronunciation of "gh" in laugh, "or" in women and "ti" in nation. These three words were formed from the extra letters in definitions in the down clues.

The winner is Miss D. Frances Milne of Shepton Mallet, Somerset. The runners up are E.L.A. Pounds of Bath, Avon; Ray Parry-Morris of Maidenhead, Berkshire; the Fortescue family of Cheltenham, Gloucester; A. Reid and G. Meredith of London; Roger Hooper of London.

BRIDGE
by Robert Sheehan

THE World Championships, which are held every two years, start in Tunisia on Monday. The Open event is the Bermuda Bowl and the Women's event is the Venice Cup. Each has its teams: they play a round-robin tournament for about a week and the top eight teams go on to a knockout phase.

The Bermuda Bowl looks to have one of the strongest entries ever. The two leading USA teams (led by Deutsch and Nickell) have qualified: these teams have dominated the US National events for the past few years. The five European teams include Italy, who have won the last two European Championships, and France, the current holders of the Olympiad title. Brazil and Chinese Taipei also have strong teams, but I think the most likely last four will come from the two USA teams, France, Italy and Poland. Unfortunately there is no British presence — only the first five in the European Championship qualify.

Our hopes are in the Venice Cup. The British women (Sandra Landy and Michele Handley, Liz McGowan and Heather Dhundy, Pat Davies and Nicola Smith) won the 1997 European Championship, in style and look a strong squad. Their non-playing captain is Jimmy Anderson, with David Burn coach. I expect the last four in the event to come from Britain, the two USA teams, Germany, the Netherlands and China. You can read reports of the championships every day in the Bridge Column in Sport.

The Lady Milne Trophy is the women's home international tournament. Heather Dhundy, playing for this year's winners England, found a good defence on the hand shown in the next column.

Dealer South Game all IMPs

♠ 9	♥ K 4 3	♦ Q 10 4	♣ A 10 8 5
♠ A 8 5 3	♥ 8 2	♦ 9 6 2	♣ 6 4
♠ K J 8 4	♥ A	♦ 10 5 3	♣ 10 5
♠ J	♥ 10	♦ 10 5 3	♣ 10 5

Pass 3 NT 40 Pass
Contract: 3 NT
Lead: king of diamonds

North's Three Diamonds over West's One Diamond was asking her partner to bid 3NT if she had a spade stopper. Obviously it is a conventional bid, but it has a desirable feature that it uses a bid not required for any other purpose — if the opponents open One Diamond and you have a strong diamond suit, it is best to remain silent.

Dhundy (West) led the king of diamonds on which East played the two, discouraging. Thus it seemed likely that South had the queen of diamonds. The problem was that a heart switch would give the contract if South had the ace; on the other hand, a low spade would be fatal if South had the king.

Dhundy found the best course of action: she cashed the ace of spades. If that had received a high card from East she would have continued spades, but when East played the four West could see that was a discouraging card. So she switched to the nine of hearts, and East took the ace to play a diamond through declarer's queen to set the contract.

WORDANSWERS

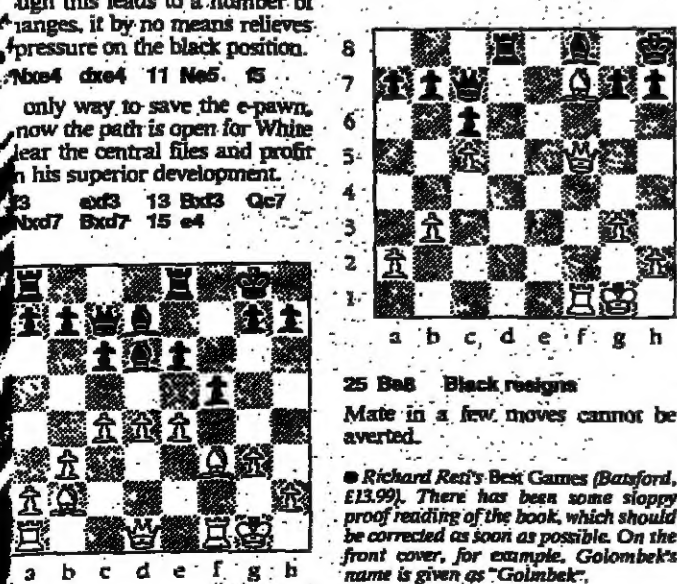
- Answers from page 32
- ADMASS**
(c) That section of the community which is easily influenced by mass methods of publicity and entertainment.
- ESRAJ**
(b) An Indian musical instrument.
- ASTATKI**
(b) The waste product of the distillation of Russian petroleum.
- FORASTERO**
(a) Any of a group of varieties of the cacao tree, *Theobroma cacao*.

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

predecessor as chess correspondent of *The Times*, Harry Lombek, was often described as world champion of chess writ- and his lucid style encouraged my enthusiasts to understand enjoy grandmaster games. In past year two of his classics, the games of Capablanca, world champion 1921-27, and of Richard Reti, one of the pioneering leaders of the hypermodern movement of 1920s, have been reissued. Reti is a game (from the book on 1) which won the brilliant prize New York in 1924. The notes are by those by Golombek.

White Reti Black: Bogolyubov
New York 1924
1 Opening
N3 c5 2 c4 e6
g3 Nf6 4 Bg2 d6
idea behind this move is to open the e-pawn, as e5 at the rook square moment.
0-0 0-0 8 b3 Re6
k continues with the plan of light through ... e5. The draw is it will weaken him on the f squares in the centre.
Bxb2 Nbd7 8 e4
strong move. For the moment, k's aim of ... e5 is prevented on eunt of 8 ... e5 9 c5 e4 10 cxd6 11 dxc7 winning a pawn.
e5 9 Nbd2 Ne4
ugh this leads to a number of ranges, it by no means relieves pressure on the black position.
Nxe4 dxe4 11 Ne5. 15
only way to save the e-pawn, now the path is open for White near the central files and profit in his superior development.
13 eaf3 13 Bxf3 Qc7
Bxd7 Bxd7 15 e4

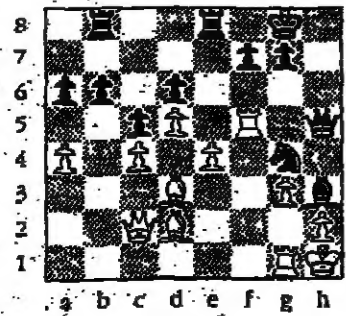


WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene
Chess Correspondent

ck to play. This position is in the game Chabaron vs. France 1997.
the danger signal here: for it is that his king has no yes. Can you spot Black's swift ical finish?
the first correct answer drawn. Thursday will win a year's scription to the Staunton jety.
he answer will be published Saturday.

1 week's winner: S.W. Hockey, mouth, Devon.



IN THE GAMES industry nothing is sacred and the late 1990s are turning out to be the era of the speculative takeover. A series of business blunders can easily transform a hugely bankable name into bait for bigger fish, such as poor Microprose.

Six or seven years ago Microprose seemed to be the name behind every other PC title we purchased. Sid Meier's *Civilization* and *Railroad Tycoon* were two of its most lucrative classics. It seemed a safe bet that Microprose was destined to dominate and even become the Microsoft of the PC games market.

Stuart Disney, editor of the industry's weekly trade bible *CTW*, said: "Microprose was huge. It was a very successful simulations company with sophisticated software for the PC like flight and tank sims, but these guys took their eye off the ball. They tried to get into the original Sega/Nintendo video games boom but didn't do it well and lost money. They also made a loss-making move into arcades with an F15 game which they tried to turn into a coin op. They were virtually bankrupt when they merged with a company called Spectrum Holobyte. They gingerly

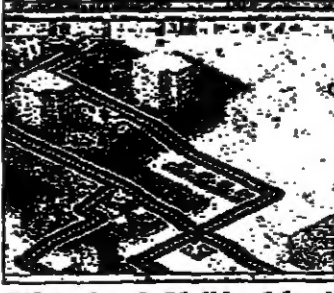


Microprose: after some bad decisions, not as solid as we thought

got out of consoles and back to basics with the Microprose brand and simulations."

At the start of this year it looked as if Microprose was about to bounce back. Several years of multimillion-dollar trading deficits were turned around and the company finally turned a profit again — of £5 million. Two sequels.

LATEST SOFTWARE



Life's a beach: Holiday Island

desperate to find a present. Telstar Electronic Studios' PlayStation game is a miserable platformer that fails to engage player or spectator.

Bubby is a nauseating name, yet it suits this character perfectly. He is a skinny bobcat who bounces along with all the grace of a lead balloon, picking up bonuses and generally jumping around to complete the 18 levels. It is a game for one or two human players.

Navigating the little blighter is an awkward and uncomfortable experience. The settings rotate through 360 degrees, a trick that worked sublimely well in another PlayStation title, *Spider*, but fails miserably here, where it becomes yet another jarring irritation.

The game is billed as 3D, yet the colours, resolution and flair of the graphics pale into insignificance and barely make it to one-and-a-half D.

You would get better service from this disc by strutting it along with glittering milk-bottle tops to scare birds in the garden rather than loading it into your console.

Verdict: 8 out of 10. See you on the beach. £34.99.

DO not purchase Bubby 3D even if it is the last game on the shelf the night before Christmas and you are

Verdict: 2 out of 10. Bubby — crazy name, dismal game. £34.99.

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES
by Tim Wapshott

Many people believed the company had been up for grabs for two years with shares hanging around the £3 mark, then inching up to £4 before GT Interactive recently stepped into the frame offering £5 a share. "They've taken it and I'm sure the shareholders will as well," believes says Disney.

A similar story has been unfolding at Virgin Interactive, another player deemed ripe for takeover, with Electronic Arts emerging as a frontrunner, which has already absorbed Maxis into its organisation, the company best known for *SimCity* and the *Sim* brand.

Many get bitten in this dog-eat-dog world. In the past three or four years several outside companies tried to join the party, only to run off licking their wounds. Disney says: "Media or movie companies have struggled to make this business profitable. We've seen people such as Warners and Philips pull out and we've seen BMG not particularly succeed."

"The leading players, such as Electronic Arts and GT Interactive, have realised that now is the time to empire-build. They are specialists, and to succeed in this market you do need specialist knowledge. Now powerful companies who know the

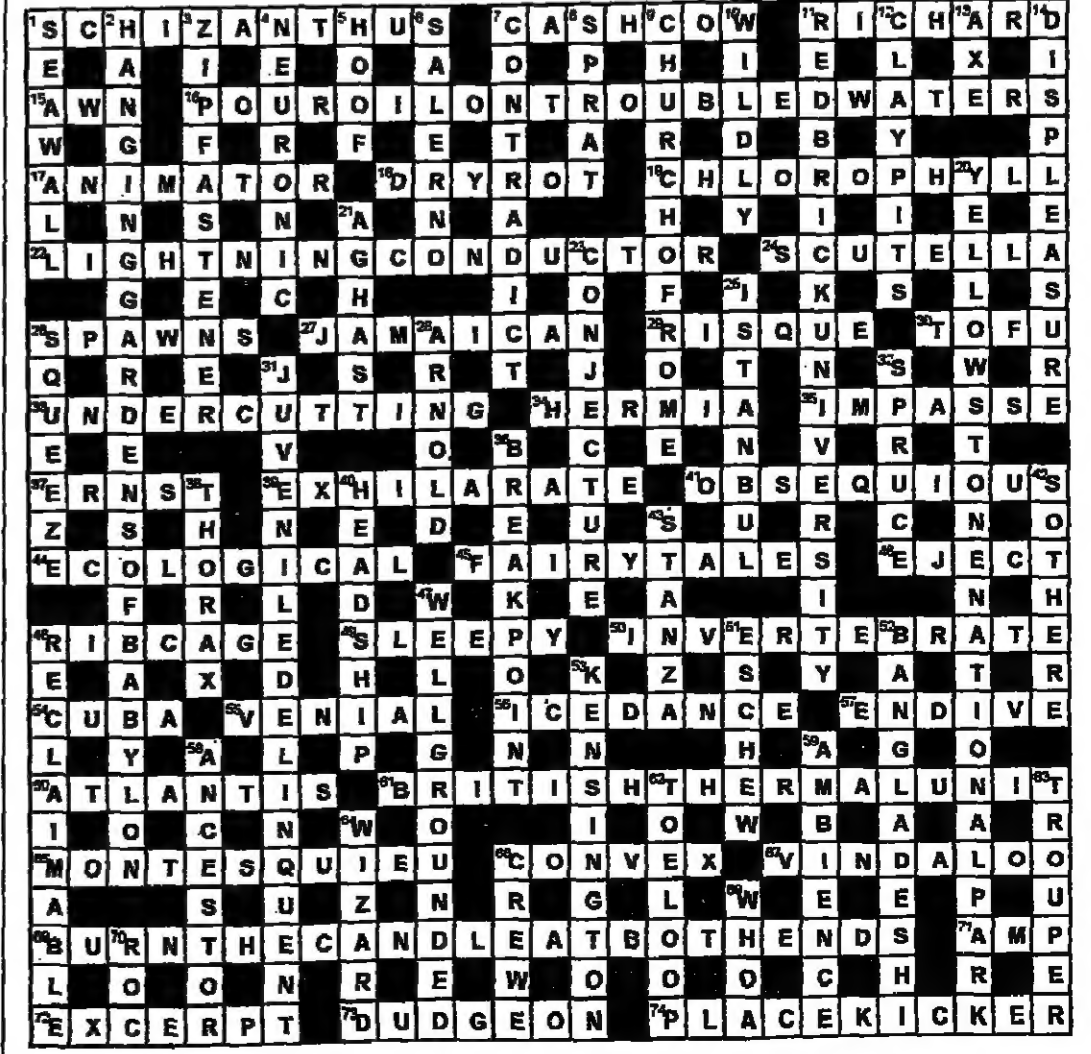
business, who know how to make it profitable, are almost being vultures, trying to pick off the other decent companies that have got great products but haven't been well managed."

The final effect of the biggest fish snapping up the smaller fry is unclear. We could easily end up with half a dozen names dominating the industry, with a stranglehold on distribution and sales. Disney said: "There has been a shift in the business. It used to be fairly easy to become a half-decent publishing company. These days it's not particularly easy to be a publishing company but it's still fairly easy to succeed."

TWO BRAINS
ANSWERS

- Solutions to the questions on page 32
- Question 1:**
B=1, R=2, W=3, Y=4, G=5
- Question 2:**
Only Wokru is bogus, the rest are genuine.

SOLUTION TO JUMBO 130



The winner of an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £105, is M Whitaker, of Street, Somerset

MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Q My daughter Dr Sarah Martin was married last week to Mr Martin Vines. How should they now be formally addressed? Are they Mr and Mrs M. Vines, Mr M. and Dr Vines or Mr M. and Dr S. Vines? Is Sarah now Dr S. Vines or should she simply keep Dr S. Martin for business? And what happens should her husband finish his PhD and become Dr M. Vines?

A Socially, they are correctly addressed as Mr and Mrs Martin Vines, but some modern female doctors are unhappy with this arrangement. In this case your son-in-law and daughter could style themselves as Mr Martin and Dr Sarah Vines. Professionally, your daughter should call herself either Dr Sarah Vines or Dr Sarah Martin. As far as the PhD is concerned, your protagonists could either be Dr and Mrs Martin Vines or possibly Dr Martin and Dr Sarah Vines.

Q Sitting at the wheel of one's car, you can say "thank you" by raising your hand with open palm. If you suffer from road rage, you could raise a clenched fist (or another gesture), but with which gesture can you say "sorry"?

— David Wickham, Somerset

A Expressions of apology are on the rise on our roads, but for polite drivers here is a suitable semaphore. Raise your hand, much in the same way as for the "thank you" sign, but with the hand held back from the wrist. At the same time conspicuously mime the word "sorry". Do this and the road rage of others should melt before your eyes.

Q I have to give my first best man's speech. The groom is one of my closest friends and I do not want to mock it up. I am not sure how to go about it and very nervous at the prospect. Could you give me some advice?

— C. Clarke, Bath

A Winston Churchill said that "the head cannot take in more than the seat can endure", sensible advice that will guide you on the length of time that you speak. I would caution you against ranking it in any way smutty: such a technique normally embarrasses more than it entertains. However, I would encourage you to be as amusing as possible. I once attended a wedding at which the entire best man's speech was conducted in rhyme, much to the delight of all present.

Q How can I stop my daily addressing me by my Christian name?

— Name and address withheld

A When leaving her notes with domestic instructions such as: "Please dust tops of pelmets" or

"Kindly change sheets in spare bedroom", conspicuously sign these messages with your full names, i.e. Jane Smith. This polite little ruse has been found to work time after time.

Q I have long been fascinated by the idiosyncrasies of the English language, and the intricacies of its correct usage. But one thing has always puzzled me. Why is it "common" to say pardon and serviette?

— Mrs Victoria Stubbs, Leicester

A A very old peeress once told me that reservations about the words "pardon" and "serviette" go back to anti-French feelings at the time of the Napoleonic Wars, when it was deemed unpatriotic to use words of obviously French origin. This seems a very valid explanation, and, as they say, "plus ça change".

Q I am PA to the managing director of a leading City firm. We offer a great deal of corporate entertainment and I make an enormous effort to do things properly. To this end I find myself in conflict with my caterer, who insists when serving a lunch party, that she begins with the guest of honour sitting on the host's right and then moves in an anti-clockwise direction, serving all the guests first then ending with the host. Surely she is wrong?

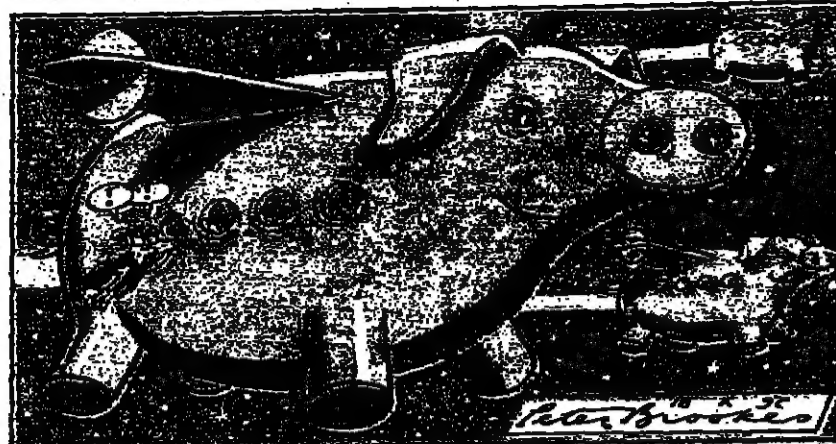
A You are quite correct. Whether using the "silver" or the more distinguished "butler" service, it is correct to first serve the guest of honour (who always takes the right hand of the host), then the host, and then everybody else in a clockwise direction. This is for two reasons: firstly, it means that if there is anything wrong with the food, the host can do something about it before everyone else is served, and secondly, it allows those at the top of the table to begin eating. The method your caterer describes is widely used in hotels, restaurants and the catering trade, but is not appropriate at a formal private dinner or lunch.

Q I know with postcards it is not customary to write "Dear So and So" at the top of the message, but what is the form with the correspondence card?

— Lucinda Maydon, Chieveley, Berkshire

A Correspondence cards retain the same conventions as postcards. Due to lack of space, written frills are kept to a minimum. The only way that postcard style varies from that of the correspondence card is that the latter is always sent in an envelope.

— John Morgan is associate editor of CQ. Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners, The Times, Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E9 6NN.

DAN BLAIR
PILOT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE

WORD-WATCHING

ADMASS
a. RC mass in the vernacular
b. A critical mass
c. The uncritical masses

ESRAJ
a. A Persian verse form
b. A stringed instrument
c. Rule in India by Portuguese

ASTATKI
a. A gangster boss
b. Waste fuel
c. A wolf-hunter

FORASTERO
a. A cocoa tree
b. A lumberjack
c. Ribbon pasta

Answers on page 31

TWO BRAINS

Question 1:
1 to 5 inclusive are allocated at random to colours brown, grey, red, white and yellow, represented by their initials. The numbers refer to the number totals in the rows and columns. What are the values for each colour?

B	B	G	Y	W	14
W	G	Y	W	B	16
Y	G	B	W	Y	17
Y	R	B	B	G	14
R	R	W	W	B	11
14	15	15	14	14	

Question 2:
Which of these words are bogus? Abaks, Cruve, Emf, Nauplii, Plongs, Woku.

R.K.

Answers on page 31.

CROSS WORDS

by Brian Greer

CURRENTLY, the compiling team for the daily cryptic puzzles consists of eight regulars (including myself) contributing from one to four puzzles a month, and seven others who contribute roughly one a month. Crossword compilers are noted for their longevity and for their retention of mental sharpness. As a result, openings for new contributors occur very infrequently.

On the other hand, there is a large group of would-be Times Crossword compilers, and I receive two or three packages each week, often containing a sizeable bundle of crosswords. The ambition of these aspirants is understandable (I had it myself 23 years ago), but usually unrealistic.

Most compilers learn the art by a process of induction. By regularly solving crosswords, they discern the patterns and conventions of clue construction.

Unfortunately, many of those who send me their efforts have failed to be sufficiently discerning. The common basic flaws that immediately trigger rejection are badly constructed diagrams with insufficient checking (my recommendation is to do what I did all those years ago and use grids from *The Times*), anagrams without indicators, a plethora of anagrams (careful analysis would have revealed that we do not exceed five complete anagrams in any crossword), superfluous words

in clues, and clues that do not make sense. Learning by doing, and by carefully analysing style and conventions, can be supplemented by studying books on the subject.

I recommend Don Manley's *Chambers Crossword Manual*, which has influenced me a lot. The other strong piece of advice is to gain some experience with local or specialised crosswords before approaching *The Times* or crosswords in any of the national newspapers.

Breaking into the circle is difficult. For those who did not get it, the answer to the clue I cited last week (*Raise over the seas*) is DON JUAN IN HELL, a clue from an American compiler showing that definition clues do not have to be uninteresting. Michael Rich will be guesting in next Saturday's column to talk about the Listener puzzle. I will be celebrating my birthday in America that day, on which the more observant of you may spot an oblique reference to my age.

— Brian Greer is Crossword Editor of *The Times*.

PICTURE LINE

READERS are invited to suggest what Stephen Fry, pictured right as Oscar Wilde, might be saying.

This picture, recently printed in *The Times*, will appear again next week with an entry chosen from those submitted.

Send "speech bubble" suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to Picture Line, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, E9 6NN.

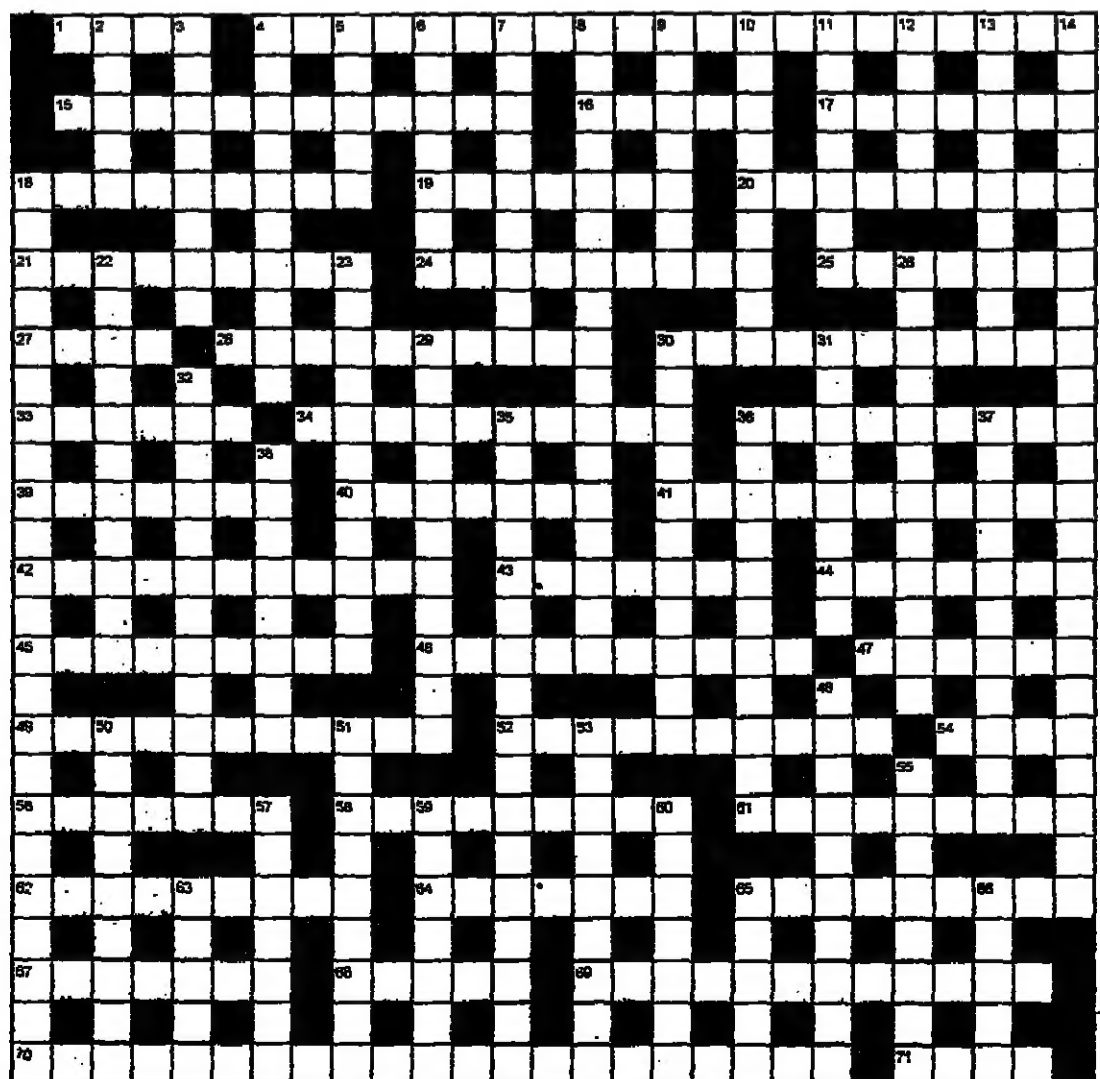
The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, October 22.

Last week's winning caption, left, was submitted by Major-General P.A.C. Baldwin of Gerrards Cross, Bucks.



JUMBO CROSSWORD 132

The prize for the first correct solution to be opened will be an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £105, the world's first interchangeable, capless rollerball/ballpoint pen. Streamlined and made from silver-plated black resin, it has perfect writing balance. Entries should be sent to: Jumbo Crossword 132, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E9 6NN to arrive by Monday October 27. The name of the winner will be published in Weekend on Saturday, November 1.

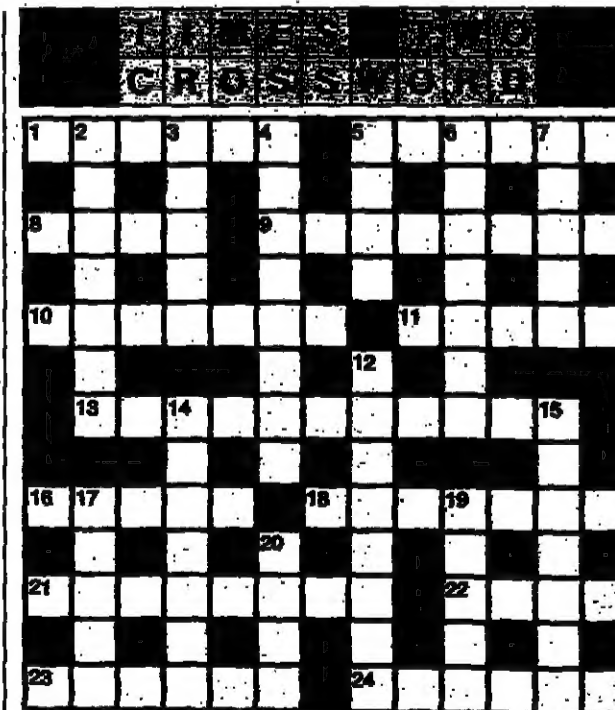
ALFRED DUNHILL
LONDON

ACROSS

- Failing to dislodge leader in (4)
- Recalling troops as a psychological ploy? (8,13)
- Drink that's a mixture of rare malt and wine (7,5)
- Man is entering scientific area from the back (5)
- A difficult situation, containing one animal disease (7)
- Constituent part of NT kingdom? (9)
- Weapon displayed by revolutionary in China? (7)
- Distance covered going round outskirts of Dorchester — could be forty or more (6,3)
- One of us encountering Martian moving near light? (9)
- One who takes pass given to reader (9)
- Dust on board expresses glides about (7)
- Chances too much of drug and dice, gutted (4)
- A means of defending certain Roman verse? (7,3)
- Port side of ketch finally destroyed — by this? (4-7)
- Having formation of choppers forever seen prominently in display? (6)
- Communist's head may be served fish (3,7)
- Time in dancing the samba is a hot sweaty experience (5-4)
- A leader of men brought in to direct good? (7)
- Show fish by the harbour? (7)
- British soldiers and sailors coming round own port (11)
- Cut selected link — forged alloy? (6-5)
- More keen to get endless money, right? (7)
- Shoot leader of advocates abandoning court case about killing (7)
- Servants scrambling in mad dash (11)
- Recall in particular if footballing body formed association (10)
- Comment about one of the gospels (6)
- Test components used by express? Tests to breaking point (11)
- Admitted one's nude frolics, making stacy suggestions (10)
- I'm in American city — South American city (4)
- Musical section associated with barber-shop? (4-3)
- The work of Penelope in not making a choice? (6)
- "It's a stomach complaint," said Peppa unappetisingly (9)
- River man seen around in lake and river area (6)
- They institute the changes announced by the Church (7)
- Blunder attending meeting in America? It produces a buzz (6-3)
- Instrument dial's usual shape in a car, possibly (7)
- Successor has little time at first for these people (5)
- Drink from gourd beside house (6,6)

DOWN

- Former pair seen around exotic city (5)
- Vision certainly enthralled a number? On the contrary (8)
- Some Italian polenta in a stew (10)
- Clumsy Russian writer, we hear (5)
- Carry tailless rodents as a fetish (7)
- Complaint caused by greed — not at first completely upset (9)
- Play up to reprobate disgracefully, having to rearrange debts (3,5,2,3,4)
- Look into bug that's going round girl (fiarty) (4)
- Massive traffic jam (8)
- Swinging decade? (7)
- Goodlike turn (5)
- Avoiding painfully direct words (11)
- Notch; grievance (to settle) (5)
- Antarctic bird (7)
- Wake-up call (8)
- Welsh symbol, sounds like disclosure (4)
- Safe haven (6)
- Conspicuous gesture (6)
- Once aboard, I repaired the transmitter (6,6)
- Good, say, to encourage the tabloids? (6,5)
- Unruly skins marched, having avoided work (12)
- They're most of all found among Europeans? Yes and no (11)
- Encourage soldiers to form emergency service (4,7)
- Historical period among most recent ones (8)
- Air circulating in a small room? (7,5)
- A way of handling stacks of crates (3,7,7)
- Was leading force in deep sea hard to manoeuvre? (11)
- Notice changes about 75% of Irish contestants (11)
- Councillor, having one's support, is more brisk (8)
- I fail to be upset, surrounded by nuisances and prophets of gloom (10)
- Do the job of hitmen, i.e. tall men suspiciously (9)
- Overwhelms one sister's boyfriend, interrupting (9)
- The sound of wings? (6,5)
- Victorian inventor to promote item for front door (4-3)
- Skinned peach stuffed into appropriate kind of food (3-4)
- Normal planet? Not quite — it's one newly prominent (7)
- Secret police work at, for example, holding leader of spies up (7)
- Wicked individuals befriended for wicked acts (5)
- Toilet appliance a bit short? It's not the genuine article (5)
- Support bishop maintaining status quo? (5)



No 1228

- | | |
|---|---|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Team (6) | 3 Straightest path (7) |
| 5 Eastern temple, Chinese (5) | 3 Knock over, surprise result (5) |
| 8 D'Urville/Darbyfield (4) | 4 Poor verses (8) |
| 9 Massive traffic jam (8) | 5 Disappointingly proper (4) |
| 10 Swinging decade? (7) | 6 Brave, chivalrous (7) |
| 11 Goodlike turn (5) | 7 Divergency item (5) |
| 13 Avoiding painfully direct words (11) | 12 Recognisable portrait (8) |
| 16 Notch; grievance (to settle) (5) | 13 Henry — Dido and Aeneas composer (7) |
| 18 Antarctic bird (7) | 15 Fabulous beast; wild idea (7) |
| 21 Wake-up call (8) | 17 Mate its object (5) |
| 22 Welsh symbol, sounds like disclosure (4) | 19 Soviet prison-camp system (5) |
| 23 Safe haven (6) | 20 Thirt WW2 field marshal (4) |
| 24 Conspicuous gesture (6) | |

SOLUTION TO NO 1227
ACROSS: 1 Mumbo jumbo 7 Release 8 Lined 10 Cardiff 11 Doffs 12 Reduce 15 Lapse 17 On one 18 Audible 21 Shift 22 Blubber 23 Ne'er-do-well
DOWN: 1 Molar 2 Miami 3 One-off 4 Unladen 5 Benefit 6 Precarious 9 Disappears 13 Deceive 14 Creator 16 Bamboo 19 Duce 20 Babal

THE TIMES BOOKSHOP

CROSSWORD ENTHUSIASTS — SPECIAL OFFER:
The Times Jumbo Crossword Book 132 is available to Times readers for just £4 (RSP £4.99) while supplies last from The Times Bookshop. Compilation volumes of *The Times Two Crosswords* (Book 6 — £2.99), *The Times Crosswords Volume 11* (22 13 — £2.99 each) and *Times Computer Crosswords* on disk may also be ordered, with free delivery, along with any other books from The Times Bookshop.
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